New Testament Stories Dramatized

Harry W. Githens

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New Testament Stories Dramatized

Fresh, Colorful, Instructive

BY
HARRY W. GITHENS

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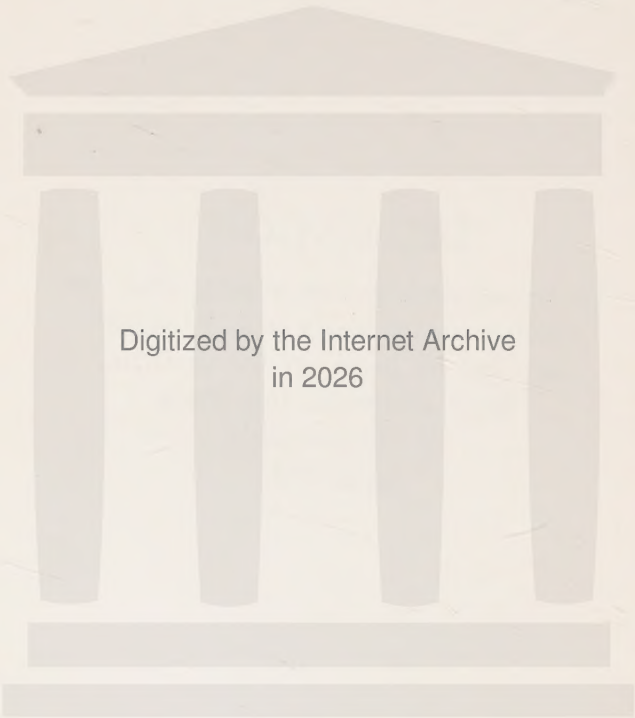
DEDICATION

To young people everywhere, who are striving to promote the Kingdom of God by loyal service in their local churches, this book is affectionately dedicated.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CONTENTS

PAGE

STATEMENT BY THE AUTHOR 9

STORY 1.

THE STAR OF THE EAST 11

STORY 2.

THE FISHERMAN 23

STORY 3.

THE WANDERER 36

STORY 4.

OPENED EYES 48

STORY 5.

AN UNEXPECTED GUEST 65

STORY 6.

DOWN THROUGH THE ROOF 76

STORY 7.

THE MAGIC TOUCH 84

STORY 8.

FOR THIRTY PIECES OF SILVER 97

STORY 9.

Delivered from Prison 105

STORY 10.

At the Beautiful Gate 114

STORY 11.

A Captain's Confession 122

STORY 12.

The First Martyr 128

STORY 13.

At the Feet of the Apostles 138

STORY 14.

The Wrath of Israel 142

STORY 15.

A Stricken Traveler 154

STORY 16.

An Interrupted Coronation 167

STORY 17.

A Herald of the Cross 174

STORY 18.

A Labor Riot 185

STORY 19.

An Ambassador in Bonds 192

STORY 20.

The Last Journey 207

STATEMENT BY THE AUTHOR

OF recent years the drama has found a special place in the special programs of the church. It is a means of drawing and instructing many people who are not attracted by the regular service. Those who seldom read the Bible may in this way be given a vision of its wonderful stories and thus be attracted to study the Book of books.

The interest taken in our former volume, DRAMATIZED SCENES FROM THE OLD TESTAMENT, has prompted the preparation of these, which we hope will meet with even greater favor. It is the author's purpose here to present an accurate interpretation of the Scripture story with such additional imaginary dialog as is suggested by the recorded events.

The last seven dramatizations are taken from the life of Paul, while the first thirteen have to do with our Lord and the Twelve. These dramas have been tried out and found to be very effective in impressing Biblical scenes upon the minds of the people assembled.

Those who use these dramatized stories may find considerable help in Bible pictures and in books from public libraries, which may be studied for additional costume ideas.

New Testament Stories Dramatized

STORY 1

THE STAR OF THE EAST

CHARACTERS.

JOSEPH—A Carpenter of Nazareth.
MARY—His Young Wife.
THE EGYPTIAN, THE HINDU, THE GREEK } Wise Men.
HEROD—The King.
THE INNKEEPER AT BETHLEHEM.
A ROMAN GUARD.
SEVERAL SHEPHERDS.
ANGEL MESSENGER AND CHORUS.
A SERVANT TO HEROD.

COSTUMES.

JOSEPH—A man of middle age, with dark hair and beard. Robe of dark blue, with girdle of yellow. Small turban of yellow. Staff.

MARY—Woman of about seventeen years. Robe of gray, with white scarf over head.

THE EGYPTIAN—Man of very dark skin, with dark beard. White robe reaching to ankles and open at throat. Sash of bright blue. Cloak of brown, edged with yellow; it reaches to ankles and has sleeves of elbow length, permitting sleeves of shirt to show. On

his head is a red, silk kerchief, edged with fringe, and held in place by a golden cord.

The Hindu—Man of dark skin; tall and slender. White hair and beard. White shirt and white, wide-flowing breeches, gathered at the ankle. White cloak. Turban made of white shawl. Red slippers.

The Greek—Man of smaller build, but heavy. Fair complexion; light hair, without a covering. White tunic made knee length, with short sleeves, low neck and gathered at the waist with a band. Bare legs and sandals. Bright scarf around shoulders.

Herod—An old man with white beard. Robe of purple, bordered with scarlet; girdle of gold. Cap of crimson velvet, which falls down over back of neck and shoulders. Narrow crown of gold holds the cap in place.

Innkeeper—Man of middle age, with dark hair and beard. Robe of dark red or brown, and turban of yellow.

Roman Guard—Man with short, dark beard. Tunic of tan, edged with Roman design in purple and gold. Cape of dark brown, lined with yellow, which is fastened at back of shoulders. Helmet made from old derby hat painted white, with paper, fan-shaped ornament in front. Bare legs, with sandals. Shield and spear.

Shepherds—Tunics of tan or brown toweling, with capes of dark brown, green, purple and red. Small turbans of white, yellow and brown. Some have smooth faces and some have beards. All have shepherds' crooks.

Angel Messenger—Robe of white, with white hair and beard. Other angels have white robes, but no beards. All have glistening wings.

SERVANT TO HEROD—Use the guard, without his cape and shield. A small turban of light green, instead of the helmet.

SCENE I.—ON THE DESERT.

(Dark-blue back curtain, covered with stars, including one very large star of silver. If possible, use an electric star. At rise of curtain the Egyptian is kneeling, with head bowed to the earth. Soft music, "Star of the East." He lifts head, with hands clasped, and gazes at star. The Hindu enters slowly from right and kneels in the same position as Egyptian. Presently the Greek enters from left and joins them. When music is at its height they rise together, arms outstretched, and walk towards the star. All lights should be dim, with moonlight from above.)

SCENE II.—BEFORE THE INN OF BETHLEHEM.

(Front wall is made of building-paper, painted to represent rough stones, with a doorway made like a gate. The building has appearance of having a flat roof. There are no windows. Vines running over it. The Keeper sits on a high stump or stool by the gate. Groups of men and a few women standing at right and left. They are dressed similar to Joseph and Mary. The two latter enter from left, and she sits upon a low bench, while he approaches the Innkeeper.)

Joseph (clasping his hands)—The peace of Jehovah be with you.

Keeper—The same give I in return to you.

Joseph—I am Joseph of Nazareth, a carpenter; you may have heard of me. My wife is with me yonder. [Points.] Is there room for us in the khan?

Keeper (shaking head)—I regret there is not.

Joseph—I am of the line of David, and this is the town of my fathers. My wife is the daughter of Joachim and Anna, of Bethlehem, of whom you doubtless have heard, for they were of great repute and highly honored.

Keeper (nodding)—Yes, I know them well. Therefore I salute you again [jumps down from seat and bows], and if you care to go with me I will show you that there is not a lodging-place left in the house, nor in the court, nor upon the roof.

Joseph (shaking his head)—Nay, thy word is sufficient.

Keeper—See the many who have been waiting, some since noon!

Joseph—Who are all these people, and why are they here at this time?

Keeper—That which doubtless brings you, rabbi—the decree of Cæsar, to be counted for taxation.

Joseph—I do not care for myself, but the night promises to be cool, and my young wife can not sleep in the open. Is there not room in the town? Surely there should be some place.

Keeper (shaking head)—These people [waves hand] have all enquired in the town and report its quarters all engaged. But, rabbi, I will do the best I can for you. There is a cave near by, used for the shelter of sheep and cattle in stormy weather; it is clean and there is sufficient straw for a good bed. If thou art willing, I will take thee to it.

Joseph—We will go with thee gladly, my brother. [They exit.]

[CURTAIN.]

Scene III.—On a Hill Near Bethlehem.

(Arrange a slope by using boards and boxes covered with dark material. Boulders at one side, behind which is a platform on which angels appear. Shepherds reclining at opposite side, one standing as guard. There is a dying fire at front center, arranged from an electric bulb covered with red paper and sticks. Moonlight from above. Back curtain same as in Scene I. Curtain rises slowly, revealing tableau of shepherds, while Handel's "Pastoral Symphony" is played. Then the star breaks through the sky. It should be a brilliant light.)

Watchman—Awake! Awake!

Shepherds (jumping up)—What is it?

Watchman—See! the sky is on fire! [Light turns red.]

(Shepherds fall upon knees, then bow heads to ground.)

Messenger (appearing in flood of light)—Fear not! [They raise their heads.] Fear not: for behold, I bring you good tidings of great joy, which shall be to all people. [They sit upon their knees.] For unto you is born this day in the city of David a Saviour, which is Christ the Lord! And this shall be a sign unto you: ye shall find a babe, wrapped in swaddling clothes, lying in a manger. [Note: This message should be given very slowly; it may be sung, if desired.]

(The light turns various colors in rotation, and a chorus of angels appear behind the Messenger.)

Chorus (singing)—Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace, good will toward men! [Repeat several times, with accompaniment.]

(Angels retreat slowly, continuing singing, until it is heard faintly in the distance.)

A Shepherd—It was Gabriel, the Lord's messenger unto men.

Another—"Christ the Lord is born," he said.

Another—And He is in the city of David, which is Bethlehem, yonder [points].

Another—And we shall find Him in a manger.

Another—There is but one place in Bethlehem where there are mangers, and that is the cave near the inn.

Another—Let us go and see if we can find Him. [All rise.] The priests and doctors have been looking for Him for a long time.

Another—Verily, let us go up and worship Him.

Another—But the flocks?

Another—The Lord will take care of them. Let us hasten. [Exit.]

(Orchestra plays "O Come, All Ye Faithful," which also, after thorough practice, may be sung by chorus behind the curtain.)

[CURTAIN.]

SCENE IV.—OUTSIDE THE INN AT BETHLEHEM.

(Same arrangement as in Scene II. The place is deserted, except for the Keeper, on guard, with a lantern hanging on the wall. Very dim light from above. Shepherds enter.)

Keeper—What would you have?

Shepherd—We have seen and heard great things.

Keeper—Well, we, too, have seen great things, but heard nothing. What did you hear?

Shepherd—Let us go down to the cave near by, that we may be sure; then we will tell you. Or, come with us, and see for yourself.

Keeper—There is no one there but a man from Nazareth, with his wife. I gave them the place for lodging at sunset.

Shepherd—No, the Christ is born.

Keeper—The Christ! Who told you so?

Shepherd—His messenger from heaven appeared to us on the hill yonder [points], in the light which you also saw.

Keeper (laughing scornfully)—The Christ indeed! And how are you to know Him?

Shepherd—We were told that He was born this night and is now lying in a manger. The cave must be the place.

Keeper (going)—Verily, I will go with thee. [All exit.]

[CURTAIN.]

SCENE V.—IN THE CAVE NEAR BETHLEHEM.

(The place is small, with dark curtains representing the walls. Scallops of gray cambric, representing rocks, hang from a framework overhead. At back center is a small opening, resembling a door, through which a dim light may be seen. Low mangers are built on right side and filled with straw. The floor also is covered with straw, and piles of it on left side. The only light comes from a lantern hanging from the roof. Mary sits by a manger, in which the babe is sleeping. An electric light is placed in the manger. Joseph stands near. Shepherds and Innkeeper kneeling in adoration. This scene is arranged only as a tableau. Musical ac-

companiment, "O Little Town of Bethlehem." If desired, a group of angels may stand behind the manger.)

[CURTAIN.]

SCENE VI.—OUTSIDE THE NORTH GATE OF JERUSALEM.

(It is a solid wall, with gate of massive doors. Roman Guard stands by the gate. Wise-men enter from right.)

Egyptian (bowing)—I give you peace. We have come great distances in search of one who is born King of the Jews. Can you tell us where He is?

Guard—Herod?

Egyptian (shaking head)—Nay, for Herod's kingship is from Cæsar.

Guard—There is no other king of the Jews.

Greek—But we have seen His star in the east and have come to worship Him.

Guard—Then thou must seek further, for I am not a Jew. Take your question to the doctors in the temple, or to Annas the high priest, or to Herod himself. If there be another king of the Jews, they will find him.

Hindu—Wilt thou then grant us admission to the city, that we may continue our quest?

Guard (opening gate)—The gates are open to thee; enter, and I will send a messenger before thee.

[CURTAIN.]

SCENE VII.—A ROOM IN THE PALACE.

(Arrange as elaborately as possible with rugs, draperies, urns and vases, candlesticks, Oriental divans and couches. Throne at back center, upon which Herod is sitting.)

Servant (at door)—Enter; the king is here.

(Wise-men enter slowly and with dignity and bow their heads to the floor before Herod. Servant places three stools, cushions or hassocks for them.)

Herod—Arise and seat yourselves. [They do so.] This afternoon I received report from the guard at the north gate of the arrival of three strangers, appearing to be from far countries. Are you the men?

Egyptian—We may not doubt that we are the same strangers.

Herod—Who are you and from whence do you come? Let each of you speak for himself, in turn.

Hindu—We will gladly tell thee of our mission, and the Egyptian, being eldest, will speak first.

Egyptian—I was born in Alexandria, a prince and a priest, having the education customary to my class. But very early I became discontented with the religion of my people and could look only to the one holy God as the Maker and Giver of all things. One night, as I prayed, a beautiful star came up before me and a voice said unto me: "Blessed art thou, O son of Egypt! With two others from distant lands thou shalt see the Saviour of the world and testify of Him. In the morning arise and go to meet them. And when you have all come to the holy city of Jerusalem, enquire of the people: 'Where is he that is born King of the Jews? for we saw his star in the east, and are come to worship him.' Put all thy trust in the Spirit, which will guide thee." So the light led me across the desert, meeting my brethren on the way. Could anything be more divinely ordered?

Herod—It is a pretty story. Will another speak?

Greek—I am a native of Athens. My people were

given wholly to study, and from them I derived the same passion. But I could not make myself to believe in the religion which the philosophers were teaching, so, in despair, I tore myself away from the schools and journeyed to Mt. Olympus. There I prayed for a revelation, believing that God would give me an answer. And suddenly from the darkness before me there appeared a star of unusual brilliance, which slowly arose and drew nearer, until it was directly above me. I fell down and heard a voice speaking: "Blessed art thou, O son of Greece! With two others, coming from the uttermost parts of the earth, thou shalt see the Saviour of the world and be a witness for Him. In the morning arise and go to meet them, keeping trust in the Spirit that shall guide thee." So the light led me to Antioch, where I bought a camel for my desert journey, and hither I have come.

Herod—Thy words are well chosen. We will hear from the third.

Hindu—My dress will tell thee that I was born a Brahman. My life, consequently, was ordered down to its least act, its last hour. I might not walk, eat, drink or sleep without danger of violating a rule. And the penalty was to my soul. But these things I could not believe. I questioned everything, and finally took myself away, seeking a solitude far up in the Himalayas, where I fasted and prayed, waiting for a revelation. One night, as I walked beside a beautiful lake, a light suddenly appeared out of the water and a star arose until it stood overhead. The brightness stunned me and I fell to the ground. Then a voice spoke unto me, saying: "Blessed art thou, O son of India! With two others from far quarters of the earth thou shalt

see the Redeemer of the world and be a witness that He hath come. In the morning arise and go meet them, putting all thy trust in the Spirit which shall guide thee." And from that time the light hath stayed with me. I am done.

Herod—What was the question you asked the officer at the gate?

Egyptian—We asked him: "Where is he that is born King of the Jews?"

Herod—It is no wonder that the people were so curious. You also arouse my interest. Is there another king of the Jews?

Greek—There is one newly born.

Herod (beating his hands upon arms of chair)—Not to me! Not to me! [After a pause:] Where is this new King?

Hindu—That, O king, is the very thing we have come to ask of thee.

Herod—You bring me a riddle surpassing any of Solomon's. But, if you can help me solve it, I will honor you as kings honor each other. Tell me all you know about the newly born King, and I will join you in the search for Him; and when we have found Him I will bring Him to Jerusalem and train Him in kingcraft.

Egyptian—We have told you all that we know, O king.

Herod—But how was it, when you were so widely separated by seas and deserts, that you all came to hear of Him?

Hindu—It is the work of almighty God. He bade us come hither, promising that we should find the Redeemer of the world, that we should see and worship

Him, and bear witness of Him. As a sign, we were each given to see a star.

Herod—If, as I believe, O illustrious men, you are indeed the heralds of the Christ just born, know that I have this day consulted the lawyers and teachers of the Jews, who declare that He should be born in Bethlehem of Judea. So I bid you go thither and search diligently for the young child, and, when you have found Him, bring me word again, that I also may come and worship Him. [Rises.] Peace be with you.

[CURTAIN.]

SCENE VIII.—IN THE CAVE NEAR BETHLEHEM.

(Mary sits with the babe in her arms, Joseph standing near. The Wise-men are kneeling, with gifts on floor before them. The only light comes from the lantern. Tableau. Choir sings "Joy to the World.")

STORY 2

THE FISHERMAN

CHARACTERS.

SIMON PETER—A Fisherman of Capernaum.
LEAH—His Wife.
ANDREW—His Brother.
REBEKAH—Leah's Mother.
NECHO—A Physician.

SCENES OF THE STORY.

SCENE I.—Courtyard in the house of Simon in Capernaum; the calling.

SCENE II.—The same, several weeks later; a mother restored.

SCENE III.—Room in a house in Bethany; crucifixion day; repentance.

COSTUMES.

SIMON PETER—A man just past middle age, with hair and beard slightly gray. In Scenes I. and II. he wears a sleeveless, knee-length tunic made of unbleached muslin or toweling, raveled at the bottom. His head is covered with a square of bright-green cloth, falling to the shoulder and held in place by a coil of orange-colored cloth. Sash of orange color. Bare legs, with sandals. In Scene III. he wears a flowing robe, once white, but now soiled with mud and water.

Andrew—In Scenes I. and II. he wears a costume similar to Peter's, but with head-dress of different color. His tunic also may be of darker cloth. In Scene III. he wears a flowing robe of white, with overdrapery of richly colored cloth and head-dress of contrasting color.

Necho—An older man, with white hair and beard. Flowing robe of rich colors. Sash and head-dress of contrasting colors. Sandals.

Leah—A woman of middle age, with dark hair. In Scenes I. and II. she wears a gown of coarse cloth, reaching half-way between knees and ankles. It may be of any bright color, with sash of contrasting color. A scarf of bright color is tied around her head and falls back on shoulders, in Scene I. In Scene II. she wears no head-covering. In Scene III. she may wear the same gown, or one of different color, if desired.

Rebekah—An older woman, dressed much the same as Leah. Should wear different gown in Scene III., if possible.

Scene I.—Courtyard in the House of Simon in Capernaum.

(A six-foot wall, painted to represent stones, at right and back. Lattice gate in center of back wall. House at left, with rude stone stairway leading to rooms above. Door at foot of stairs leads into house. Narrow windows in wall of house. Palm or olive tree near wall at right. Fishing-nets in corner. Bench beneath back wall, near house. Various-sized water-jars stand at numerous places about the yard. Several feet beyond the back wall is an exterior scene, or a curtain

of plain blue. Leah is pouring water into one of the smaller jars.)

Rebekah (coming downstairs)—Hast thou been to the well already, my daughter?

Leah—Only once, mother. I tarried to mend a net for Simon. He and Andrew have been fishing all night. I will go at once to fill the other jars.

Rebekah—It is well that thou shouldst go early, before the heat of the day comes upon us. Didst thou see any one at the well?

Leah—Only the servants of Cleo, the rug merchant.

Rebekah—Thou didst not talk with them, Leah?

Leah—Why should I not speak with them?

Rebekah—Because thou art a woman of culture, from the house of thy father Nathan. [Sits on bench.]

Leah (firmly)—I am now of the house of Simon, my husband, a worthy and respected fisherman of Capernaum.

Rebekah—Had it not been for the advancing of thy age, it might have been arranged for thee to wed a wealthy merchant.

Leah (sitting on stairs)—I do not sigh for riches when I have a devoted husband like Simon, mother. And, truly, the poor have some freedom that the rich may not share. I believe I should hate the secluded life that would be mine if we were rich. And behind the seclusion of the lattice I should never have heard Jesus of Nazareth speak.

Rebekah—Verily, thou art right, my daughter. Many would give of their wealth to hear the Teacher. Yet I do not understand the power by which He worketh the great miracles which are reported. He seemeth to be like a mighty magician.

Leah—The women at the well were talking of that very thing. One of them said she overheard her master telling that the Teacher cast a demon from out one of the officers of the synagogue and made him like a man born anew.

Rebekah—Truly, His works are marvelous, and I fain would see Him myself.

Leah (going to the gate)—Simon tells me that He speaks with him often by the lakeside and in the market-place. Perhaps Simon can arrange for us to see Him. [Looking off right.] Why, here comes Simon now, running, and Andrew is with him! I never saw them in such haste! What can be the matter?

(Simon and Andrew rush in at the gate and throw down their nets in the corner. Simon takes Leah by both hands and whirls her around, while Andrew hurries to Rebekah and greets her.)

Leah—Why, Simon, my husband, what is the meaning of this joy? Did you have an extra good haul to-day?

Simon—Nay, beloved, that is not it. The Master has called me!

Andrew—And He has called me also.

Leah—*Who* called you, and called you for *what?*

Rebekah (coming nearer)—What are you talking about, sons?

Simon—Oh, don't you understand? Our friend Jesus—

Andrew (interrupting excitedly)—Jesus the Teacher has called us to be His disciples.

Leah—What meanest thou by disciples?

Andrew—It is a group of men whom He is choosing to be His helpers.

Leah (throwing arms around Simon's neck)—Oh, Simon, my husband, tell me all about it! [Leads him to a bench, where they sit. Rebekah also sits, and Andrew stands near.]

Simon—We were down by the lake, beloved. Andrew and I were washing our nets, weary because we had toiled all the night and taken nothing. Presently, looking up, I saw the Master approaching, with a great crowd following. As He drew nearer He asked if He might get into one of the boats and push out a little way from the shore, so that He could talk to the people without being crowded among them.

Leah—Dost thou think they would have killed Him?

Simon—Nay, nay. They were but eager to hear Him speak. So we rowed Him out and He spake to them from the boat. Oh, Leah, I wish that I could tell thee of the wondrous things He said. The people were deeply moved.

Leah—And thou wert with Him in the boat while He talked?

Simon (nodding)—And brother Andrew was with me. When He had finished speaking He thanked me for the use of the boat and commanded that I should cast the net for a draught. Then I said unto him: "Master, we toiled all night and took nothing: but at thy word I will let down the nets." And, doing this, we caught such multitudes of fishes that our nets began to break. We beckoned to our partners, James and John, the sons of Zebedee, that they should come and help us. Then we filled the two ships so full that they began to sink.

Andrew—Never was such a marvelous draught of fishes heard of in Galilee.

Simon—Then I knelt down, amazed, and said: "Depart from me; for I am a sinful man, O Lord." But He answered me: "Fear not; from henceforth thou shalt catch men." So, when we had brought the boats to shore, we left them and followed the Master.

Leah—Whyfore hast thou come hither?

Simon—That I might tell thee of my great joy.

Leah—But whither went the Master?

Andrew—He has gone into the home of some friends to seek rest for awhile.

Rebekah—What thinkest thou the man meant by telling thee that thou shouldst catch men?

Simon—I believe He knew of the desire that so long has burned within my heart.

Rebekah—And what is that desire, Simon?

Simon—Ever since I was a lad I have felt within me the desire to stir men's hearts. And now the Master hath called me to help Him.

Leah—Where wilt thou go with Him, my husband?

Simon—That I know not, beloved, but where He leads me, there will I follow Him.

[CURTAIN.]

SCENE II.—SAME AS BEFORE, SEVERAL WEEKS LATER.

(Andrew is in the courtyard and Necho comes down the stairs.)

Andrew (clasping his hands)—O mighty physician, dost thou think there is any hope for the life of Leah's mother, Rebekah?

Necho (shaking his head)—Nay, for she burneth up with the fever. My medicines are of no avail now. Her spirit will depart before evening.

Andrew (wringing his hands)—Canst thou not restore her for one single moment, that we may again thank her for her gentle ministry to us?

Necho—Nay, good friend, it is beyond the power of man. The hand of Jehovah is upon her.

Andrew—And her daughter Leah is weary with long hours of watching.

Necho—Verily, she hath been a faithful nurse to her mother. I think she longeth for the return of her husband, for she hath told me that if he and some friend of his would return, her mother might get well. It is very sad, for I declare unto thee that there is no hope.

(Leah appears at top of stairway and hurries down.)

Leah (excitedly)—Oh, Andrew, he is coming! I can see him from the housetop!

Necho—Who is coming, my child?

Leah—The Master is coming with Peter. He will lay His hands upon my mother and she will recover. [Runs back up stairway.]

Necho—Alas! this false hope is about to upset her mind.

Andrew—Nay, the Master will bring us life and happiness.

Necho—Whom dost thou mean by the Master?

Andrew—The Nazarene who has been teaching and healing in our city for some time past.

Necho—Verily, I have heard of Him. He is a sorcerer.

Andrew (forcibly)—Nay, He is no sorcerer, but it is the power of God working through Him. Couldst thou but hear Him speak and witness one of His healings, thou wouldst also believe on Him. It was but

a few weeks ago that He called me and also Peter to be among His chosen disciples.

Necho—And who is Peter?

Andrew—That is my brother Simon's new name which the Master has given him.

Necho—What is the meaning of it?

Andrew—It means "rock."

Necho—Rock? Thy brother Simon a rock? Aha! He seemeth more to me like a straw which bloweth with every wind.

Andrew—Perhaps when thou hast observed the effect of the Master upon his life thou wilt think differently of him.

(A light appears from upper room of house, growing gradually brighter. Necho and Andrew draw back in amazement.)

Necho—Oh, I am fearful! What is it?

Andrew—The Master is within and His radiance is shining upon us.

Necho—Aha! my whole body vibrates with a strange power.

Andrew—'Tis always so when the Master is near.

Necho (cautiously, close to Andrew)—I have heard rumors that the rulers desire to kill Him.

Andrew—That is because they are jealous of His popularity and because He criticizes some of their methods of observing the law. They do not believe that He is the Messiah. They are heartless. But we will protect the Master if they attempt to molest Him.

Necho—Verily, He hath a power greater than any man ever had.

(Rebekah appears at top of stairs, then comes down.)

Andrew (drawing back)—Look! Yonder stands Mother Rebekah.

Necho (covering eyes with arm)—Nay, it is her spirit.

Rebekah (approaching, with outstretched arms)—Andrew, thou hast come? And here is our neighbor, Necho.

Andrew (taking her hands)—Mother, is it really thyself or thy spirit?

Rebekah—Dost thou not behold me with thine own eyes? Why stand ye in such amazement? The Master has come a long journey with Simon, and I must prepare food.

Andrew—Dost thou forget that thou wert ill?

Necho—I came only a moment from thy bedside and thou didst not know me, for thou wast burning with the fever.

Rebekah—Verily, I do remember the fever, but the Master stood beside me, took my hand and I arose.

Necho—A great miracle hath been wrought.

Rebekah—Of a truth I am a witness that the Nazarene is the Son of God.

[CURTAIN.]

SCENE III.—ROOM IN A HOUSE IN BETHANY, EVENING OF CRUCIFIXION DAY.

(It is a humble dwelling, with rough, bare walls. Table, chairs and couch placed about the room. There also are several water-jars of various sizes. Short candles burning in little cups or jars which hang from the ceiling. Rebekah, sitting at table with face forward on arms, looks up as Andrew enters.)

Rebekah—Oh, Andrew, my son, is it thou?

Andrew—It is none other, Mother Rebekah. [Puts arm around her neck.] Hast thou heard that Jesus of Nazareth is dead?

Rebekah—Aye, the news has passed like flames of fire from lip to lip. Jehovah be praised that His suffering is past.

Andrew—It is horrible that men should torture one who hath flesh and blood like unto themselves.

Rebekah—Didst thou witness the crucifixion, Andrew?

Andrew (shaking head)—Nay, we all fled but one, when He was arrested in Gethsemane. Only John remained with Him.

Rebekah (grasping his arm)—Thou didst not mean that Peter forsook Him

Andrew (nodding)—Aye, we all were cowards. With our Leader gone, we are like sheep without a shepherd.

Rebekah—But *Peter?* I did not think that he would ever leave his Master—Peter, the rock!

Andrew—Verily, he failed in the time of need, as did all of us.

Rebekah—Then, why has he not come hither with thee?

Andrew—I know not whither he has gone. He followed the Master to the house of Caiaphas, but there he also became terrified and fled.

Rebekah—Thinkest thou that he has tarried to arrange for the burial of his Master?

Andrew—Nay, nay, for that has already been done. Joseph of Arimathea begged the body from Pilate, and we have laid it in a new tomb.

Rebekah—To-morrow is the Sabbath, but on the first day of the week we must go early to the tomb and anoint the body with spices.

Andrew (nodding)—Others will gladly join thee in that last loving service. But where is Leah?

Rebekah—She is searching for Peter. When the tidings came that the Master had been arrested, she was fearful for the life of her husband, and all day she has sought tidings of him. Her grief will be unbearable when she hears that Peter deserted his Master.

Andrew—The arrest, as thou hast heard, was sudden and at night. We all were unprepared. As His followers, we also may be arrested at any moment.

Leah (entering excitedly)—Mother! Andrew! Has Peter not yet returned?

Rebekah—Nay, my daughter; no word has come from him.

Leah—Andrew [grasps his arm], canst thou not tell me of my husband?

Andrew—Nay, child, but he will come.

Leah—Oh, dost thou think that he will? All night long I waited in terror, and all through the day I have searched the streets of Jerusalem, but no one hath tidings of him.

Andrew (placing his hand on her shoulder)—Be thou not fearful, for soon he will return to thee.

Leah—Then, thou dost not think that he is dead?

Andrew—Nay, he is not dead. He only sorroweth because our Master hath died.

(Peter appears in the doorway and the others turn to him, speechless. His clothes are wet and muddy, and he has the appearance of deep despair. He slouches in without speaking.)

Leah—Oh, who art thou? [He turns away.] Peter! [Goes to him.]

Peter (sinking upon the floor)—Come not near unto me.

Leah (clasping her hands and falling upon her knees)—Oh, my husband, thou art ill!

Peter (shrinking away)—Do not touch me! I am a traitor.

Leah (trying to console him)—Peter, thou art beside thyself with sorrow. Thy clothes are soaked with rain and thou art weak for lack of food. Thou must eat.

Peter [rolling upon the floor]—O God, that I could die!

Leah—Comfort thy heart, my husband. We also grieve in this sad hour. Jehovah did not will it that thou shouldst die with the Master. But I know that thou wouldst gladly have given thy life in His defense.

Peter (raising himself)—Nay, beloved, thou dost not know the heart of thy husband, for in the Master's hour of greatest need I was overcome with fear and I forsook Him.

Leah—Forsook Him?

Peter (nodding)—I even denied that I had ever known Him.

Leah (taking Andrew's arm)—Andrew, tell me it is not true!

Andrew (placing his hands upon her shoulders)—My sister, we all were cowards and forsook Him, except John.

Peter (recovering himself)—Three times I declared that I had never known Him. [Stands.]

Leah—Oh, Peter, how couldst thou deny Him thus?

Peter—And now He is dead! How can I bear the anguish of my soul? O God, that I could die! [Tears his hair as he paces the floor.]

Leah—Yet must thou live and proclaim His word. Dost thou forget that He said unto thee: "Thou art Peter, and upon this rock I will build my church"? And also He called thee to be a fisher of men.

Peter—Why dost thou torture me with these words?

Leah (placing her hands upon his shoulders)—I desire not to torture thee, my husband. But 'tis only those who suffer that God calls to fish for men.

Peter—But, beloved, I am so vile. Thinkest thou that He will ever forgive me?

Leah—Already He has forgiven thee because thou hast confessed thy sin.

Peter (radiantly)—Then will I give the rest of my miserable life to make atonement. [Looking upward, with clasped hands.] O Master, give me strength to endure!

(During the latter part of this dialog Rebekah paces the floor with her face in her hands, standing for a moment now and then, with her back turned. Finally she goes to a bench and rests her head upon her arm on the back of the seat. Andrew goes and puts his hand upon her head, but both look toward Peter as he gives his final lines.)

[CURTAIN.]

STORY 3

THE WANDERER

CHARACTERS.

ELAH—The Younger Son.
NATHAN—The Elder Son.
BENJAMIN—Their Father.
KISH, AMON, BARAK } Travelers.
MEN AND WOMEN IN THE LAND OF DESIRE.
TWO SERVANTS.

SCENES OF THE STORY.

SCENE I.—The border of a field; a restless brother.

SCENE II.—The home of Benjamin; father and son.

SCENE III.—Roadway near the Land of Desire; the goal of dreams.

SCENE IV.—A house in the Land of Desire; with evil companions.

SCENE V.—Roadway near the Land of Desire, some weeks later; false friends.

SCENE VI.—A field, several days later; repentance.

SCENE VII.—The home of Benjamin; forgiveness.

COSTUMES.

All characters wear flowing robes, some of white, with overdraperies of bright cloth; others with entire

costume of bright colors, and turbans of contrasting colors. In Scenes I. and II., Elah and Nathan wear tunics of knee length, made from toweling, and girdled at the waist. The costumes of the servants are similar. All wear sandals. The older men wear dark beards.

Scene I.—The Edge of a Field.

(Back curtain should be a landscape, if possible; otherwise a plain blue or yellow drop. Palm-tree at rear right, and a well near by. The well may be made with a box frame about four feet square and one foot high, covered with building-paper and marked to represent stones. A cask for drawing water stands on edge of the well. At rise of curtain, Elah and Nathan are at the well, the latter drawing water.)

Elah (lying down under the tree)—Come, my brother, and rest thyself awhile. The day is hot and my feet are sore.

Nathan—Verily, the day *is* warm, but, if we rest, who will fetch water for the sheep and the camels?

Elah—Our father hath servants to do such work. If they were not so smitten with idleness, we should not need to toil.

Nathan—Nay, our servants are not idle, but are faithful to their tasks. It is thou who art inclined to idleness, my brother.

Elah—But there is to-morrow, and the next day, and the day after that. Much time yet in which to labor. [Yawns.]

Nathan—Boast not thyself of to-morrow, for thou knowest not what a day may bring forth.

Elah (laughing)—Yea, eat, drink and be merry, for to-morrow we may die.

Nathan—Labor diligently while the day is at hand, and at night thou canst take thine ease.

Elah—But the nights should be for pleasure and the days for rest. It is thus in the Land of Desire.

Nathan—What dost thou know of the Land of Desire? Hast thou been listening to the travelers?

Elah (nodding)—It is a land flowing with milk and honey, where silver and gold may be had for the asking, and where nothing but pleasure abounds.

Nathan—Verily, thou hast been listening to the travelers. Hast thou forgotten our father's counsel: Hearken not unto the voice of strangers; "if sinners entice thee, consent thou not," "for their feet run to evil." Thou shouldst hear the instruction of our father and forsake not the law of our mother.

Elah—Our father is a just man, but old, and understandeth not the ways of the young. [Rises.] I will go to the Land of Desire and seek mine own ways.

Nathan—Wouldst thou bring sorrow unto the heart of our father? Remember the commandment of Moses: "Honor thy father and thy mother, that thy days may be long in the land which Jehovah thy God giveth thee."

Elah—Of what use are length of days if they be not filled with pleasure? Tarry thou here if thou wilt, and comfort our father in his old age.

Nathan—Yea, he that abideth with wise men shall be wise, but a companion of fools shall be destroyed. How wilt thou find thy way unto the Land of Desire?

Elah—I will follow with the travelers, for they are wise in such journeys. They also have silver and gold.

Nathan—A good name is rather to be chosen than great riches, and loving favor rather than silver and

gold. [Sneeringly:] And wilt thou expect the travelers to sustain thee?

Elah (shaking his head)—Nay, I will go to our father and ask of him the portion of goods that falleth to me, for he is an old man and the time of his departure is near at hand.

Nathan—And when thou hast spent all thy share, what wilt thou do then?

Elah (laughing)—Verily, I will find more. The travelers say there is much gold in the Land of Desire.

Nathan—Lying lips are an abomination to Jehovah; but they that deal truly are His delight. Thou must not hearken to the travelers' ensnaring tales.

Elah (angrily)—They do not lie unto me, for they bring much wealth with them.

Nathan—But it is not thine until thou hast earned it. After thou hast spent thy portion from our father, then thou wilt return and beg of me.

Elah (haughtily)—Nay, I will not beg of thee. Thou wilt need thy portion to honor me when I return home, riding in the chariot of kings. [Starting off.] Behold, I go now to my father. [Exit.]

[CURTAIN.]

SCENE II.—HOME OF BENJAMIN.

(This may be previously arranged behind Scene I. If possible, let it represent the porch of the home, reached by long, deep steps. Beyond the porch the interior of the house may be seen through an arched door. Rugs, palms and flowers are visible on the porch and in the house. Benjamin stands in the doorway and Elah enters from right.)

Benj. (coming down)—Why art thou returned so soon from the fields, my son?

Elah (sitting on steps, with his head in his hands)—The sun is hot and my feet are sore. Bid the servants do thy work.

Benj.—Wouldst thou remain in idleness, my son? A little labor will give thee strength and will put color into thy flesh.

Elah—Nay, I like not the work in the fields. Why should thy sons become as servants? Thou art a man of great possessions, therefore should thy sons be respected.

Benj.—Honest labor will increase thy friends, my son. Therefore refresh thyself with milk and bread and return unto thy brother.

Elah—Nay, I will not. I am weary of this life, for there is no pleasure in it. [Rising.] Give me, I pray thee, the portion of goods that falleth to me, that I may go unto the Land of Desire, where men may eat and drink and live at ease.

Benj.—And where is this Land of Desire?

Elah—It lieth far beyond the plains.

Benj.—And who hath told thee of it?

Elah—A traveler, yea, many travelers.

Benj.—And who are these travelers, my son?

Elah—They are men who journey from city to city, finding great pleasure and seeking others to join them. Their robes are rare and costly, and they have much silver and gold.

Benj.—Blessed is the man who walketh not in the counsel of the ungodly. [Repeats first Psalm.]

Elah—Yea, but these travelers are wise men and they have stirred my soul. I would fain go with them.

Benj. (putting his hand on Elah's shoulder and looking him in the eyes)—They are wise in their own conceits, my son. They seek only to ruin thee and to obtain thy gold. Jehovah is far from the wicked; but He heareth the prayer of the righteous. The house of the wicked shall be overthrown, but the tent of the upright shall flourish.

Elah (kneeling)—Father, I pray thee, give me the portion that shall be mine at thy death.

Benj.—Wouldst thou leave thy father in his old age? Wouldst thou cause him to mourn thy departure?

Elah (passionately)—Oh, my father, thou knowest that I love thee. But I can not always abide here. In the strength of my youth I would go and see the world. Then will I obtain gold and wisdom and pleasure.

Benj.—Wisdom is the principal thing, my son; therefore get wisdom; yea, with all thy getting get understanding. [Claps his hands for servant.]

Elah—I am resolved that I will go, my father. Wilt thou have me to go empty-handed?

Benj. (to servant who enters)—Bring my bags of gold and silver. [To Elah:] Nay, my son, I will give unto thee the portion which is thine, lest I be departed when thou art returned. And on thy journey remember these things doth the Lord hate: a proud look, a lying tongue, hands that shed innocent blood, a heart that deviseth wicked imaginations, feet that be swift in running to mischief, a false witness that speaketh lies, and he that soweth discord among brethren. Keep thy heart with all diligence, for out of it are the issues of life.

Elah—Yea, all these things hast thou taught me from my youth up.

Benj. (taking one bag of coins which servant brings)—And here is the portion that belongeth to thee. Spend it wisely, and, if sinners entice thee, consent thou not. My son, forget not my law, but let thine heart keep my commandments, for length of days and long life and peace shall they add to thee.

Elah (embracing his father)—Thou art good and gracious unto me, my father.

Benj.—Trust in Jehovah with all thine heart, and lean not unto thine own understanding. In all thy ways acknowledge Him, and He will direct thy paths. Be not wise in thine own eyes.

[CURTAIN.]

SCENE III.—ROADWAY NEAR THE LAND OF DESIRE.

(Arrange as in Scene I. Elah and travelers enter from left.)

Kish (pointing right)—Before us lieth the Land of Desire.

Elah—It appeareth to be a beautiful country.

(Others laugh delightedly in pantomime behind his back.)

Amon—It is a country flowing with good wine, abundant with rich food and filled with fair women.

Barak—Yea, it is a land of ease and pleasure.

Kish—But travelers must pay for these things. Hast thou gold and silver?

Elah (nodding)—Yea, my wallet is filled with coins of gold and silver. Therefore will my days be spent in ease and my nights abound in pleasure. Let us hasten. [All exit right.]

[CURTAIN.]

SCENE IV.—A HOUSE IN THE LAND OF DESIRE.

(A rich curtain will be sufficient for the sides and background. A long, low table, such as was used in those Oriental days, occupies center of room. It is spread with an Oriental cloth, upon which are set dishes of gold, silver and glass. Paper plates, covered with gold and silver paper, will answer the purpose. Great baskets and dishes of fruit occupy the center. A company of richly dressed young men and women recline on couches around the sides of the table, the women leaning their heads upon the shoulders of the men. Elah and a young woman are at the head of the table. They all keep up a pantomime of eating and drinking, amid shouts of laughter, while a dancing girl, with tambourine, gives a performance behind the table. Two servants move about, passing food. Hold this scene for several minutes, with music.)

[CURTAIN.]

SCENE V.—ROADWAY NEAR THE LAND OF DESIRE, SOME WEEKS LATER.

(Use same arrangement as Scene III. Two travelers enter from right, meeting one entering from left.)

Kish—All hail, my friends, and wishes for a prosperous journey.

Amon—And may the blessings of the gods be upon us. Whither shall we travel?

Barak—Let us take our way again into the country, that we may find another youth who longeth for a sojourn in the Land of Desire. [All laugh.]

Kish (lifting Amon's purse)—Methinks thy purse is heavier since we entertained the young stranger.

Amon (feeling Kish's purse)—There is much weight also in thine own, my friend.

Barak (holding up his own purse)—Verily, we all have made profit by his acquaintance. [They laugh merrily.]

Kish—I am sorry for the lad. He is young and alone in a strange land.

Amon—Bah! he has made many friends, of which we are the richer.

Barak—Verily, he is a poorer, but we trust a much wiser man.

Elah (entering right)—Greetings unto thee, my friends!

Barak (turning quickly)—Why callest me thy friend? I know thee not. [Exit left.]

Amon—Thou art a stranger unto me. Come, brother, lest he molest us. [Exit.]

Elah (to Kish)—Sir, surely thou dost know me, the youth whom thou didst bring hither from the country afar off.

Kish—Hast thou not found in the Land of Desire the things for which thy heart yearned?

Elah (passionately)—Verily, I did for a time find ease and pleasure, but now my purse is empty and my friends have departed. I can not even find work for mine hands.

Kish (laughing)—Thou mayest tend to my swine while I am off on a journey. [Exit.]

Elah (clasping his hands)—Had I hearkened unto the voice of my father I should not have come to this. Must I feed swine for a living? Yea, it must be done, or I perish.

[CURTAIN.]

SCENE VI.—A FIELD, SEVERAL DAYS LATER.

(Similar arrangement to Scene V. Elah sits on a rock beneath a tree. His clothes are soiled and ragged.)

Elah (wringing his hands)—How many days must this misery be endured? Verily, my soul is weary of this life. Mine eyes are dim with weeping, and my heart is heavy with sorrow. Even the swine have their food, but I have naught to ease my hunger. At home the servants of my father have bread enough and to spare, and I perish with hunger. [Rises.] Therefore will I go unto my father and will say unto him: "Father, I have sinned against heaven and before thee. I am no more worthy to be called thy son; make me as one of thy hired servants." [Exit.]

[CURTAIN.]

SCENE VII.—THE HOME OF BENJAMIN.

(Same arrangement as Scene II. Benjamin stands, looking off right.)

Benj. (shading his eyes)—Who is it that I behold approaching at such speed, even running in his eagerness? Verily, it is my son, my beloved Elah, my wandering boy. [Runs down to meet Elah.] Welcome, my son, for I am made glad in thy return. [Embraces him.]

Elah (kneeling)—Father, I have sinned against heaven and in thy sight, and am no more worthy to be called thy son.

Benj.—Arise and seat thyself beside me. [Leads him to the steps, where they both sit. A servant appears and Benjamin beckons to him.] Bring forth the best robe and put it on him, and put a ring on his

hand and shoes upon his feet. Also bring hither the fatted calf and kill it, so that we may eat and be merry. For this, my son, was dead, and is alive again; he was lost, but is found. [Servant exits.]

Elah—My soul has been sorrowful and my strength wasteth for want of food.

Benj.—Didst thou not find food in the far country?

Elah—Yea, there was much food and wine until the famine came upon us. Never did I eat food of such richness, nor drink wine of such flavors. My tongue is parched in remembrance of it.

Benj.—Hear thou, my son, and be wise: Be not among winebibbers, among gluttonous eaters of flesh, for the glutton and the drunkard shall come to poverty. Look not thou upon the wine when it is red. At the last it biteth like a serpent, and stingeth like an adder. Wine is a mocker, strong drink is raging, and whosoever is deceived thereby is not wise.

(Servant brings beautiful robe, a ring and sandals, which he puts on Elah.)

Elah—This is more than I deserve, my father.

Benj.—Nay, it is because of my love for thee and my joy in thy return. [Rising.] Come, now, and let us partake of refreshments.

(They go into house, and there is a sound of music and laughing. Several people can be seen moving about. Nathan enters from right and meets servant coming from house.)

Nathan—What meaneth all this music and merry-making?

Servant—Thy brother hath returned from the far country, so thy father hath killed the fatted calf because he hath received him safe and sound.

(Servant goes off left, and Nathan sits upon steps, with face in his hands.)

Benj. [coming from house]—My son, why art thou cast down? Thy brother is here, so come and make merry with us.

Nathan—Lo, these many years do I serve thee, neither transgressed I at any time thy commandment, and yet thou never gavest me even a kid that I might make merry with my friends. But when thy wandering son hath come home, who hath devoured thy living, thou dost make a great feast.

Benj. (putting his hands upon Nathan's shoulders) —Son, thou art ever with me, and all that I have is thine. It was meet that we should make merry and be glad, for this thy brother was dead and is alive again; he was lost and is found.

[CURTAIN.]

STORY 4

OPENED EYES

CHARACTERS.

PHILIP—A Young Blind Man.
NATHAN—His Father.
REBA—His Mother.
CAIAPHAS—The High Priest.
JONATHAN, NICODEMUS, ALEXANDER } Members of the Council.
JONAS—A Landlord.
ESTHER—Landlord's Daughter.
GIDEON—A Messenger.
COMPANY OF PEOPLE.

SCENES OF THE STORY.

SCENE I.—A street in Jerusalem; friends.

SCENE II.—The home of Nathan that evening; good news and bad news.

SCENE III.—The same next day; a miracle.

SCENE IV.—In the temple, an hour later; the wrath of the Pharisees.

SCENE V.—The home of Nathan that evening; transformed lives.

COSTUMES.

PHILIP—A young man, with tunic made of muslin or toweling, bound at the waist with a bright girdle.

Turban of bright cloth. In first three scenes he has a staff. Bare legs and sandals.

NATHAN—An old man, with flowing hair and beard. Flowing robe of dark cloth, with girdle.

REBA—An elderly woman, with gown of dark material, bound at waist with girdle.

CAIAPHAS—Man of middle age, with dark hair and beard. Robe of white, with cloak of red or purple, elaborately embroidered. Turban of yellow and orange cloth, coiled high.

JONATHAN, NICODEMUS and ALEXANDER—Men of middle age, with dark hair and beards. Flowing robes of dark cloth (bath-robes will do). Turbans.

JONAS—An elderly man with dark hair and beard. Flowing robe of rich cloth. Turban.

ESTHER—A young woman in bright, flowing gown. Scarf on head, falling back over shoulders.

GIDEON—Costume similar to Philip's, with a cape of bright color.

COMPANY OF PEOPLE—This group should include both men and women who are dressed similarly to the other characters.

SCENE I.—A STREET IN JERUSALEM.

(Philip sits in the shadow of a tree or building, begging for alms. He has a small fife or flute upon which he plays occasionally. The people stop at one side to listen a moment. Some shake their heads and pass on. Some drop coins in his cup.)

Philip (speaking occasionally)—O tender-hearted, have compassion upon a poor, blind man.

O thou who seest, gain merit for thyself by giving alms to one who can not see.

Woe, woe is me! for I have been blind from birth. O good people, pity and help a poor, blind man.

Esther (approaching and patting his head)—A hearty greeting, my friend. How dost thou fare to-day? [People scoff in pantomime.]

Philip (cheerfully)—Oh, it is thou, my Esther! How I rejoice at the sound of thy greeting. Except for the love of my father and mother, thou art the only sunshine that comes to my life.

Esther—Why should I have a voice, or eyes, or hands, or feet—verily, why should I live—if I do not bring happiness to my friends? [She stoops and gives him a drink from his flask.]

Philip—But the people surely will scoff at thee for giving attention to such as I. Why dost thou pollute thyself by speaking to a beggar?

Esther (laughing merrily)—Little do I care for the scoffings of the people. But to-day I bring thee good tidings. Thou knowest that we have often talked together of Jesus the Nazarene, whose teachings and miracles have stirred this city and the whole country round about. This morning I heard that He is again in Jerusalem, and perchance it may be that He will pass this way. By calling upon Him, thou mightest be healed of thy blindness.

Philip (radiantly)—Oh, Esther, beloved, dost thou think He would heed me? All my life I have been shut in by walls of darkness. What a joy it would be to see thy face and the face of my mother and my father! If only it might be true. [Sadly:] But, alas! I fear it can not, for I have no silver with which to pay Him, and surely He would expect much for such a cure.

Esther—Nay, Philip, He expects no silver or gold for His work.

Philip—Then, what must I do to receive my sight?

Esther—Only believe on Him as the Son of God; call upon Him trustingly, and He will heed thee.

Philip (kissing her hand)—O beloved, my soul already burns with love for Him, and, if I can but receive my sight, then perhaps I can declare my love for thee.

[CURTAIN.]

(Orchestra or solo, "Open My Eyes that I May See.")

SCENE II.—IN THE HOME OF NATHAN THAT EVENING.

(Reba is busy preparing supper. Nathan enters left, leading Philip, who is whistling or humming.)

Reba (advancing to meet them)—My heart is glad in thy returning, Philip, my son. [Kisses him.] I know thou hast had a good day, for thy voice is joyful.

Philip (sitting beside her)—Nay, mother, the coins in my cup are few, but the joy in my heart is overflowing.

Nathan (sitting opposite them)—He led his old father a merry race in his eagerness to tell us his secret.

Reba—Then, keep us no longer waiting to know thy happiness, my son.

Philip (putting his arm around her)—Mother, wouldst thou believe that I might ever receive my sight?

Reba (shaking head sadly)—Nay, my son, for thou hast been blind from birth, and no one has ever received sight at thy age.

Nathan—Who gave thee such foolish thoughts, my son?

Philip—Do not chide me, father. Thou hast heard reports of the great Prophet, Jesus of Nazareth, who hath stirred the whole country with His teachings and works?

Nathan—Yea, we have heard of Him, but He worketh with Beelzebub, the prince of devils.

Philip—Thou shouldst not speak thus, my father, when thou hast neither seen nor heard Him. Many have testified that He doth raise the dead, heal lepers and cripples, and restore sight to the blind.

Nathan—It is an abomination to Jehovah to upset the afflictions He has placed upon us.

Reba (to Nathan)—Wouldst thou not rejoice if our son should receive his sight, my husband? Why dost thou doubt his faith?

Nathan—Thou knowest that I would give my miserable life in payment to any one who could open our son's eyes, for he is guilty of no sin, nor are we. If it were not for the infirmities of my body, I would work at any trade, so that he need not sit day after day and beg by the roadside. [Clasps head with hands and sways his body.] Woe! woe! because of the affliction that is upon us.

Philip (slipping over and putting his arm around Nathan)—Fret not thyself, my father, but only have faith to believe, for I am told that all these miracles of the Prophet are wrought upon those who have faith in Him.

Nathan—But we can not go unto Him, for I am too feeble to travel, and thou canst not see the way. Moreover, dost thou know where He lodges?

Philip—I learned to-day that He has come again to Jerusalem, and perchance He may pass my way, that I may speak unto Him.

Reba—Surely such faith should be rewarded, my son. [Rising.] But come, let us sup, for the meal is ready and I know that thou art hungry. [Nathan leads Philip to the table.]

Philip—In my great joy I even forgot that I was hungry, mother. The lunch thou gavest me was more than I could eat, so I shared it with Laban the cripple, who sat near me. [Reba brings food to table.]

(Loud knocking is heard.)

Nathan (going and opening door)—Peace be unto thee, Jonas.

Jonas (entering and speaking harshly)—It is well that thou dost wish me peace, but that is not all thou shouldst give me. Have I not warned thee that the hire of this house is long overdue?

Nathan (wringing his hands)—But thou hast promised to give me time. Thou knowest that I have been ill and our son here is blind.

Jonas—Come, come! Ten pieces of silver for the hire of this house!

Nathan (shaking his head)—Silver and gold we have none, and our food is provided day by day from the gifts unto our son. Perhaps to-morrow—

Jonas—Ye are always making promises of to-morrow. If ye can not pay me now, then out ye must go. [Starts to pick up a bench.]

Nathan (taking his arm)—Sir, wilt thou not have mercy upon us? We have no other place to abide.

Jonas (jerking away from him)—Thus always do ye plead for time, but never do ye pay me.

Philip (feeling his way across the room to Jonas)—Oh, good sir, give us a few days more in which to pay thee. Heed our affliction, I pray thee. Perchance tomorrow my gifts will be greater and I will pay thee. Then will Jehovah bless thee for the mercy thou dost show unto us.

Jonas (dropping the bench)—Thou dost not deserve so much as an hour, but three days will I give thee. Then thou must fulfill thy promises or out ye go. [Exit.]

Reba (wringing her hands)—Oh, why is this misery come upon us? A husband ill and stricken in years! A son who is blind! And now our house to be taken from us. Oh, God of Israel, show mercy! [Kneels in prayer. Nathan sits with bowed head.]

Philip—Let not thy hearts be sad. Only trust in Jehovah and He will give thee the desires of thy heart.

[CURTAIN.]

(Music, "Trust and Obey" or "Never Give Up.")

SCENE III.—SAME AS SCENE II., NEXT DAY.

(Reba is working about the room when Nathan staggers in.)

Nathan (falling upon a cot)—Bring water quickly, beloved.

Reba (rushing to him with cup of water)—What aileth thee, my husband? Thy head burneth with fever.

Nathan—The sun beateth upon the highway like fire and I am overcome with the heat thereof.

Reba—Thou shouldst not have gone forth until evening.

Nathan—I have been searching for work, but no one will employ me because of mine infirmities. Therefore must we be cast forth from this place to wander as beggars.

Reba—Jehovah is ever mindful of His own, beloved. As our son went forth in faith to-day, even so must we have faith.

Nathan (sitting up)—Dost thou think that faith will calm the wrath of Jonas? It is certain that he will cast us out.

Reba—Thou must rest thyself, my husband. [Smooths his pillow.] Thou art too weak to stand.

Nathan—Nay, the water hath revived me. I must go soon to bring Philip from the roadside.

Reba—Nay, I will go in thy stead.

Philip (off stage)—Mother! Father!

Reba—Hark! some one is calling! [Goes toward door.]

Philip (running in, followed by Esther)—Mother! Father! Behold thy son that was blind. He seeth thee. [Nathan rises.]

Reba (amazed)—Thou seest me? Seest thy mother's face that thou hast never seen before?

Philip (embracing her)—Art thou the mother who hast cared for me all these weary years of darkness? Beautiful art thou, yea, more beautiful than I could imagine. [Turns to Nathan.] And thou, too, O father, art the one who hast led me forth each morning and guided me home each weary evening. Now I gaze upon thee with eyes that see.

Nathan—Is it true that thou art my son that was blind? Verily, thy form I know, and thy clothes I know, but thy face is radiant as though it were born

anew. How did this wondrous change come upon thy countenance?

Philip—The Prophet from Galilee, passing by, had compassion upon me. [Turns to Esther.] Thou, Esther, who saw it done, tell it to them.

Esther—Canst thou not speak for the joy of it, my friend?

Reba (to Philip)—Who is this girl, my son?

Philip—A beautiful friend who hath cheered me as I begged by the roadside.

Esther (modestly)—Nay, I am only one of the many who have seen thy son at his task each day.

Reba—And thou wast present when my son received his sight?

Esther (nodding)—To-day, when I chanced to be passing, a crowd pressed close around him. In the midst of the multitude was the great Prophet of Galilee. A man said unto him, pointing toward thy son: "Master, who did sin, this man or his parents, that he was born blind?"

Nathan—And what answer did the Prophet make?

Esther—He replied: "Neither did this man sin, nor his parents: but that the works of God should be made manifest in him." Then He spat upon the ground and made clay of the spittle, and when He had anointed thy son's eyes He lifted His hand as though calling down the power of God, saying unto Philip: "Go, wash in the pool of Siloam."

Philip (breaking in eagerly)—I shall never forget that journey! This girl, and other people whom I had never seen, led me down to the pool. And when I had gone into the water I prayed: "O God, who in the beginning didst say, 'Let there be light,' and light ap-

peared, send light to this poor blind man that he may see, in the name of the Prophet, who is the Light of the world.'' And after I had washed, the pall fell from my eyes and I saw the sunlight, the trees, the people; I saw this girl, Esther, more beautiful than the vision of an angel.

Reba—Never has such a thing been heard of in Jerusalem.

Philip—When I was come up out of the pool I broke my staff in pieces and leaped into the air, praising God. Then I came hither with Esther as fast as we could run together, while the people marveled at the thing that had come to pass.

Reba—Then, we are not dreaming, but thou canst really see?

Philip (nodding)—Verily, I can see, but sight bewilders me. How beautiful everything is. Come, Esther [takes her face in his hands], let me gaze upon thy face, for I have only seen thee as in a dream. And how beautiful thou art. [Clasps hands, with face uplifted.] O God of Abraham, it is to Thee that I owe the adoration, for by Thy power alone these darkened eyes have been unsealed. [Observes Nathan sitting with face in his hands.] Oh, my father, why art thou cast down? Dost thou not rejoice with me?

Nathan (lifting his head)—Verily, I do rejoice with thee, my son, but our joy is dimmed by another sorrow that is ours. Thou dost know that we must be cast forth from our home because we have no silver to pay the owner of this dwelling.

Philip (embracing him)—Grieve not, my father. Now that I have my sight, I soon can provide for us all.

Nathan—But there is no time in which to earn. The wrath of the owner is kindled against us and he will not longer wait.

Philip—Perhaps I can borrow for a time.

Nathan—There is no one to help us, for we are beggars.

Esther (coming forward)—Let me be thy friend in this hour.

Nathan (shaking his head)—Nay, thou art a stranger to us, and we could not permit it.

Philip—Surely the owner will give us more time, now that I can see to work.

Esther—Who is so hard of heart as not to heed thee in this time of rejoicing?

Nathan—He is a wealthy merchant and the owner of vineyards. His name is Jonas. [Esther starts.]

Reba (to Philip)—When thou wast a babe thy father had land and possession equal to the publican who now oppresses us.

Philip (bitterly)—The publicans have little mercy for us.

Esther—But I know this man Jonas who owns thy dwelling, and, though he is a publican, he hath a tender heart. I will speak with him about the matter.

Reba (going to her)—Thou art indeed a friend in time of need. But we should not permit it of thee.

(Knocking is heard at the door.)

Philip (opening door)—Enter and state thy errand.

Gideon (entering)—Art thou the son of Nathan and Reba? The son who was blind?

Philip—I am he. What wouldst thou have with me?

Gideon—I am come from the temple where the report of thy healing hath been made. Thou art sum-

moned there, together with thy father and thy mother. [Esther slips out.]

Philip—We will go gladly, and I will testify of the miracle and the Prophet who performed it.

Gideon—Rejoice not overmuch, for the rabbis distrust thy tale of healing. They will not deal kindly with thee if thou dost fail to convince them of the truth of the matter. [Exit.]

Nathan (wringing his hands)—Woe to all our household! The displeasure of the rabbis is worse than blindness, sickness and poverty. Surely no greater misfortune could visit us.

Philip (taking his arm)—Be of good cheer, my father. I fear not the Pharisees, for now I have eyes that see. Come, let us go straightway to the temple to give God the glory for His healing. [All go.]

[CURTAIN.]

SCENE IV.—IN THE TEMPLE, AN HOUR LATER.

(The walls may be hung with rich velvet curtains. Caiaphas sits in a large, carved chair. Jonathan, Nicodemus and Alexander are seated on the rostrum with him. Philip, with Reba and Nathan, stand in front of them.)

Jonathan—Most worthy and revered members of the council, I have brought before thee for examination a man who reports a miracle wrought in his behalf. As it was unlawfully wrought upon the Sabbath day, it merits thy consideration.

Caiaphas—Thou hast done wisely, good sir. [To Philip:] Speak, fellow, and make known thy case for our judgment.

Philip—I have little to tell, most mighty ruler. One who is called Jesus made clay and anointed mine eyes, and said unto me: "Go, wash in the pool of Siloam." And when I had done so I received my sight.

Alexander—This man Jesus is not of God, because He keepeth not the Sabbath day. He hath repeated this offense many times already, as is known to all of us.

Nicodemus—But how can a man that is a sinner do such a miracle? What sayest thou who wert healed of this Jesus?

Philip—I think that He is a Prophet.

Alexander—May I advise that we question the parents of the man, who are here with him? [Others nod approval.]

Caiaphas (to Nathan and Reba)—Wilt thou stand forth? [They obey with bows.] Is this man in our presence thy son, and is he speaking truth when he says he was born blind?

Reba—He is our son.

Caiaphas—How is it that he doth now see?

Nathan—Most noble lord, we know that this is our son and that he was born blind, but by what means he now seeth we know not. And who hath opened his eyes we know not. He is of age, therefore ask him. He shall speak for himself.

Caiaphas (to Philip)—Stand forth! Confess the truth concerning this matter and give God the glory for thy cure, if such it be, for we know that the man Jesus is a sinner.

Philip (standing erect, radiantly)—Whether He is a sinner, I know not: one thing I know, that, whereas I was blind, now I see.

Alexander—What was it that He did to thee? How opened He thine eyes?

Philip—I have told thee already, and didst thou not hear? Why wouldst thou hear it again? Will ye also be His disciples?

Caiaphas—We are disciples of Moses. 'Tis such low-born beggars as thou who are disciples of this man. We know that God spake unto Moses; as for this fellow, we know not from whence He is.

Philip [sneeringly]—Why, herein is a marvelous thing, that ye know not from whence He is, and yet He hath opened mine eyes. Now, we know that God heareth not sinners, but if any man be a worshiper of God and doeth His will, him He heareth. Since the world began, it was not heard that any man opened the eyes of one born blind. If this man were not of God, He could do nothing.

Caiaphas (rising and shaking fist)—Vile wretch of a beggar! Thou wast born in sin and dost thou teach us? Get thee hence from this sacred place and dare not enter it again on pain of thy life! [They go.]

[CURTAIN.]

SCENE V.—THE HOME OF PHILIP THAT EVENING.

(Reba and Nathan are seated.)

Reba—Several hours have passed since we left the assembly hall. It is time that Philip returned. I fear that some other misfortune has come upon him.

Nathan—The faces of the Pharisees were black with anger as they questioned us. It seemed as though I was in a den of beasts that were ready to spring upon us and tear us to pieces.

Reba—Perhaps that would have been a happy ending of our trouble, for Philip is dead to us. Our only son cast out of the synagogue. [She sways her body and wrings her hands emotionally.]

Nathan—But we must rejoice that he has received his sight. I can not believe that their act is lawful. It should be brought before the Sanhedrin.

Reba—Verily, we must hope for the coming of better days. No matter what the Pharisees may do to him, the fact that he is no longer blind is worth all that it may cost. [Knock is heard and she opens the door, admitting Jonas and Esther.] Behold, misery again comes upon us!

Esther—Nay, our friends, we come to give thee peace. My father will gladly give thee mercy.

Reba—Thy father?

Nathan—Friends, we are crazed with grief, for this afternoon the Pharisees have driven our son from the synagogue, like one who was a leper.

Jonas—Why hath he displeased them?

Nathan—He only testified that Jesus, the Prophet from Galilee, restored his sight, for he has been blind since birth.

Esther—Let not your hearts be troubled, for my father's friend, Joseph, hath arranged to give Philip employment, and then he will pay all that thou owest.

Nathan (brightening)—Then, there is hope for us and perchance for our son. Joseph hath much influence in the synagogue.

Jonas—I also have influence with Joseph, and together we will see that thy son is given a fair hearing.

Reba (looking through window at rear)—Behold, yonder cometh Philip. See how erect he walks and

how swift are his footsteps. I shall never forget how my heart was wont to ache as I stood watching him come home, for he walked like a man on the edge of a cliff. Sometimes he would stumble and fall, and the dogs would bark and snap at him. But now he comes like a conqueror. [Enter Philip.] My son, we have awaited thee with anxious hearts.

Philip (kissing the hands of Reba and Nathan)—Mother! Father! Esther! [To Jonas:] Honored friend, I salute thee! [Jonas bows gravely.] Thou art welcome to the shelter of our dwelling, and I do thank thee for thy word in my behalf with Joseph, whom I met as I came hither. He will give me work in his vineyard.

Jonas—For what reason have they cast thee from the synagogue?

Philip—For no reason, except that it was their only method of dealing with an unwelcome fact. You can meet an argument with an argument, but you can not meet a fact with an argument.

Jonas—Dost thou know what it means to be put from the synagogue?

Philip—Verily, it means that I may not be admitted to public prayer, nor to any assembly, but am now regarded as a leper. When I die, stones will be cast upon my coffin, and no one will be permitted to mourn for me. I am an outcast.

Reba (embracing him)—My son, thy father and I will never give thee up. The Pharisees have no control over our souls. They may put thee out of the synagogue, but they can not put thee out of our hearts.

Philip (pulling up chairs and benches)—Come, let us be seated while I make known what befell me as I

came hither. [All sit.] As I hurried along in my eagerness to be with thee, I was overtaken by the Nazarene, who said unto me: "Dost thou believe on the Son of God?" And in my ignorance I replied: "Who is he, Lord, that I may believe?" Then His face became radiant as the sunlight while He said: "Thou hast both seen him, and he it is that speaketh with thee." His countenance became so illumined that I could no longer look upon it, so I bowed to the dust before Him and cried, "Lord, I believe!"

Jonas—Whom dost thou think that He really is?

Philip—He is the Christ! Of that I am sure! Will ye not all believe? Was I not born blind? But He hath opened my eyes and now I do see! Oh, praise His name and believe!

Reba—Verily, He gave thee sight by the touch of His hand! Therefore must I believe.

Nathan—Surely I must believe that He is the Christ, and we must find Him and thank Him for His blessing.

Esther [to Jonas]—I have been His follower for some days past. Wilt thou not also confess, my father?

Jonas—My heart is strangely drawn to this Prophet and I must learn more of Him.

Philip (rising)—I hear the sound of voices approaching, and the air seems filled with a strange sweetness. Methinks that Jesus of Nazareth cometh to bless our home. [Throws open the door and a bright light streams in. They all kneel, with arms outstretched.] Master!

[CURTAIN.]

(Music, "All Hail the Power of Jesus' Name.")

STORY 5

AN UNEXPECTED GUEST

CHARACTERS.

ZACCHÆUS—Commissioner of Taxes.
JUDITH—Commissioner's Wife.
JOSIAH—A Tax Collector.
TAMAR—Tax Collector's Wife.
BARTIMÆUS—One Who Was Blind.
A SERVANT.
CHILDREN OF ZACCHÆUS.
A CROWD OF PEOPLE.

SCENES OF THE STORY.

SCENE I.—In the home of Zacchæus, in Jericho; outcasts.

SCENE II.—A street in Jericho next day; awaiting a visitor.

SCENE III.—The home of Zacchæus that evening; thanksgivings.

COSTUMES.

ZACCHÆUS—If possible, he should be a short man, with dark hair and beard. A robe of dark green, with overdrapery of red. Bare legs, with sandals on his feet.

JOSIAH—A man with dark hair and beard, if desired. Costume similar to that of Zacchæus, but of contrasting colors.

JUDITH AND TAMAR—Full, flowing gowns of attractive colors, girded at the waist. Large earrings and other jewels.

BARTIMÆUS—An older man, with gray hair and beard. White tunic reaching half-way between knees and ankles. Overdrapery of dark blue. Bare legs and sandals.

SERVANT—Tunic of brown toweling, reaching just below knees. It is made without sleeves and is girded at the waist with a cord. Small turban of light green. Bare legs and sandals.

CHILDREN—Tunics of various colors. Bare legs, with sandals.

PEOPLE—The group should include men and women who are dressed similarly to Josiah and Tamar.

SCENE I.—IN THE HOME OF ZACCHÆUS IN JERICHO.

(It is elegantly furnished. Zacchæus enters and Judith rises to meet him.)

Judith—Welcome home, my husband. The day has been long without thee. [They sit.]

Zacchæus—Verily, there is no place like home for a tired man at the end of the day.

Judith—Yea, but I would desire some diversion for the evening, after the solitude of the day indoors.

Zacchæus—Therefore, after we have supped, let us adorn ourselves and spend the evening upon the housetop of one of the neighbors.

Judith—Thinkest thou that we would be welcome? Nobody respects a tax collector. We are outcasts among our own people, and treated as dogs and Gentiles. Why did you ever become a tax collector, Zacchæus?

Zacchæus—Because a man must live, and there is a good living in the collection of taxes.

Judith—But we are hated by the good and despised by the patriotic.

Zacchæus—Verily, beloved, good opinions do not put bread in our mouths, nor clothing upon our backs, nor provide shelter for us.

Judith—Yea, but the people think we live in this luxury at their loss. They take us for robbers of their own prosperity.

Zacchæus—It is true that there are many collectors who do impose unjust demands upon the people, but thy husband has always been fair in the discharge of his duty.

Judith—I know thou art honest in thy dealings, my husband, but why must we be burdened with this taxation?

Zacchæus—There always have been taxes, beloved, and there always will be taxes. It is strange that every man believes his own taxes are too high and that his neighbor's taxes are too low. All men believe in taxes, but think they ought to be paid by other people.

Judith—Then, why do they blame the tax collectors?

Zacchæus—Because some of the collectors really are dishonest and unjust. But it is because most of the property owners are dishonest. We have learned that the price a man puts on his property for the purpose of taxation is not anything like the price which he puts on the same property when he is looking for a buyer.

Judith—But that doesn't remove the fact that most people consider us as the very dust of the earth.

Zacchæus—Why should we care for their opinions when we have everything that money can buy?

Judith—There are many things that money can not buy, my husband. It bought this lovely home, but it

can not bring into it the people whom we would like to entertain as guests. Yea, it can buy beautiful clothing, costly food and precious stones, but the things that are of real worth—the respect of good people and a clean conscience—it can not buy.

Zacchæus (patting her shoulder)—Trouble thy mind no more, beloved. Perhaps some day the people will learn to respect us. Hark! a servant is knocking. [Turns.] Enter!

Servant (entering)—The noble Josiah and his wife would see thee, sir.

Zacchæus—Bid them enter. [Servant admits Josiah and Tamar. Zacchæus and Judith rise to greet them.] Welcome to our home, good friends. [Servant places chairs for the men, near right front. Judith leads Tamar to a divan at rear left.]

Josiah—There are matters of importance which I would discuss with thee, Zacchæus.

Tamar—Josiah insisted that I should accompany him, for the days are long when he is away.

Judith—My heart is glad that thou hast come, Tamar. [They talk in pantomime, listening occasionally to the men.]

Josiah—It is indeed good to get back to Jericho, for there is much confusion in Jerusalem. I prefer the quietness of a smaller place.

Zacchæus—Do you have a good report of your journey?

Josiah—My conference with the officers was accomplished with satisfaction, but there is considerable unrest among our own people. They will lie, fight and do most anything, rather than pay their taxes, because to do so is to acknowledge Rome as their master.

Zacchæus—Well, I confess that I can not help sympathizing with them. If I did not have a family to support, I would give up my work as collector.

Josiah—Well, as long as there are taxes there must be collectors, and, if we do not collect them, other men will get our positions.

Zacchæus—That is true, my friend. Didst thou have any adventures on thy journey?

Josiah—I met and heard the Prophet of Galilee a few days ago. Many people follow Him, but the scribes and Pharisees gnash their teeth at the very mention of His name. I heard that they desire to kill Him.

Zacchæus—Indeed, there have been many reports of His teachings and miracles, but the opinions are so different that it is difficult to believe anything. But why do the Pharisees hate Him? Is He not a teacher of religion?

Josiah—Yes, He is a teacher of religion, but His doctrine is not approved by the Pharisees. He and His disciples do not fast, nor do they observe all the points of the ceremonial law. He does not hesitate to heal a sick man on the Sabbath, and for that act alone the Pharisees are clamorous in their demand that He be put to death.

Zacchæus—Methinks that many of the laws are unreasonable, and that even the Pharisees often ignore them.

Josiah—But I think the Pharisees hate Him most of all because He associates with tax gatherers and sinners, for in their minds we are all sinners.

Zacchæus (eagerly)—You say that this Prophet is a friend of sinners and tax collectors?

Josiah (nodding)—Verily, it is known that Matthew, one of His chosen disciples, was once a tax collector and sat at the receipt of customs.

Zacchæus—Then He must think there is hope of salvation for men like us.

Josiah (nodding)—It is evident that He does, for let me tell you what happened a few days ago. The Prophet was standing in the market-place, talking to a crowd of people, among them being many tax collectors. When the scribes and Pharisees saw it, they cried out: "Ho! ho! this man receiveth tax collectors and sinners and eateth with them!"

Zacchæus (eagerly)—Did He make reply to them?

Josiah—He spake unto them a parable, saying: "What man of you, having a hundred sheep, and having lost one of them, doth not leave the ninety and nine in the wilderness, and go after that which is lost, until he find it? And when he hath found it, he layeth it on his shoulders, rejoicing. And when he cometh home, he calleth his friends and his neighbors, saying unto them, Rejoice with me, for I have found my sheep which was lost. I say unto you, that even so there shall be joy in heaven over one sinner that repenteth, more than over ninety and nine righteous persons, who need no repentance."

Zacchæus—What thinkest thou that He meant by the parable?

Josiah—I think it is very clear that He compared the sinners and tax collectors to the lost sheep. The scribes and Pharisees are the righteous persons who think they need no repentance, but the lost sheep are loved by God, and, when they are found, all heaven is filled with rejoicing.

Zacchæus—These words fill my soul with a new hope. I would that I might see the Prophet and hear Him speak.

Josiah—It is reported that He will be in Jericho to-morrow.

Zacchæus—Then we must endeavor to see Him and hear Him.

Josiah (rising)—It is sure that a great crowd will go forth to meet Him. [To Tamar:] Come, Tamar, we must tarry no longer, for I have much work to do that I may make a good report of my collections.

[CURTAIN.]

SCENE II.—A STREET IN JERICHO NEXT DAY.

(If no street scene is available, a plain white or yellow drop will serve. This can be arranged in front of Scene I., which need not be disturbed. At extreme right is a tree, which should be as large as possible. A crowd of people is assembled, jostling together and looking eagerly off right. They are talking excitedly, but quiet down as Zacchæus and Josiah enter from left.)

One Man—Dost thou think that He will come this way?

Another—Verily, for this road leadeth from Jerusalem.

Another—Mine eyes are weary with watching.

Another—I have waited here since the city gates were opened.

Zacchæus (entering with Josiah)—It seemeth that every one in Jericho is on the streets to-day. The crowds are like unto the feast-days in Jerusalem. Many

have been waiting hours since they heard that the Prophet is approaching the city.

Josiah—He must even now be entering the gates, for I hear the shouts of the people and can see them running.

Zacchæus—I shall never be able to see Him in all this crowd. My toes are tired from standing upon them. Yonder is a sycamore-tree. Methinks I will climb into it and thus I shall see the Prophet.

Josiah (laughing)—Why, Zacchæus, you are one of the most prominent men of the city. If you climb into that tree, you will be ridiculed by the crowd.

Zacchæus—What do I care for their ridicule! If this Prophet is a friend of tax collectors, I must see Him. [He darts through the crowd and climbs into the tree.]

One Man—Ho! ho! See the robber of our homes! What is agitating his soul?

Another—Behold, the wealthy thief would see the Prophet!

Another—It is Zacchæus, the tax collector!

Another—He is become even as a bird that nesteth in a tree!

(They double up in fits of laughter, slapping each other on the back. Suddenly they divide as Bartimæus enters.)

Bartimæus (waving his arms)—Make way for the Prophet of Galilee! Jesus of Nazareth comes to bless us. Hosanna to the son of David! Blessed is He that cometh in the name of the Lord.

Josiah (approaching him)—Art not thou the blind man called Bartimæus, who sat by the wayside and begged alms these many years?

(The people crowd around him, but do not hide him from the audience.)

Bartimæus—Verily, I am that same man, the son of Timæus. Awhile ago, as I sat there, I heard the rushing of many feet and called out to ask what it meant. I was told that Jesus of Nazareth was coming. I had heard of His power to cleanse lepers, restore hearing to the deaf and sight to the blind. So I cried out: "Jesus, thou son of David, have mercy on me." I cried so long and so loud that some of the people became angry and told me to hold my peace. But I knew that, if the Prophet heard me, He would banish my darkness, so I continued to call the louder. Finally He heard my cry and commanded some men to take me to Him. So, when I was come near He asked: "What wilt thou that I should do unto thee?" And I replied: "Lord, that I may receive my sight." He said unto me: "Receive thy sight: thy faith hath made thee whole." Immediately mine eyes were opened, and, behold, *I see, I see!* [Falls upon his knees, with arms crossed over his breast and face uplifted.] Blessed be the name of the Lord!

Josiah—Surely His name is to be praised above all names. Never was such a miracle wrought in Jericho.

Zacchæus (from the tree)—Behold, the Prophet draws near!

(The people turn suddenly from Bartimæus to look off left, falling upon their knees, singing: "Hosanna to the son of David! Blessed is he that cometh in the name of the Lord!" Josiah has made his way to the foot of the tree.)

Josiah—He has seen thee afar off, Zacchæus, and looketh unto thee.

Voice of Jesus (off stage)—Zacchæus, make haste and come down; for to-day I must abide at thy house.

Zacchæus (climbing down)—Yea, Lord, I will make ready for Thee. [All the people rise.]

One Man—Hearest thou His call unto Zacchæus?

Another—Bah! He would be a guest with a man who is a sinner!

Another—Verily, He is not a prophet, else He would not defile Himself by entering the home of a tax gatherer.

Another—He keepeth not the law of Moses; He leadeth the people into foolishness.

Another—Such a person ought to be put to death. [All exit, muttering.]

[CURTAIN.]

SCENE III.—IN THE HOME OF ZACCHÆUS THAT EVENING.

(Zacchæus and Judith are seated. Several children are playing or working at some handwork.)

Judith—Oh, my husband, never was there such a day as this! To think that, of all the homes in the city, the Prophet should choose to be our guest.

Zacchæus—So it was that I said unto Him: "O Lord, I am not worthy that thou shouldst come under my roof. There are many righteous people in Jericho who are zealous in observing the law, but I am a sinner."

Judith—And, knowing that, He came unto us?

Zacchæus (nodding)—He said: "Zacchæus, the Son of man is come to seek and to save that which was lost." Then did I repent of my sins, telling Him that the half of my goods will be given to the poor,

and if I have taken anything from any man falsely, I will restore him fourfold. Thou didst hear Him say: "To-day is salvation come to this house, . . . for the Son of man came to seek and to save that which was lost."

Judith—Oh, my husband, never has my heart so rejoiced. Never has a greater honor been bestowed upon us than to have this Prophet as our guest. But far better is the joy of knowing that our sins are forgiven and that the people will now respect us.

Zacchæus (taking scroll from shelf)—Before we retire to-night I will read from the book of the law. I have provided food and shelter and raiment for my family, but here is food for our minds, raiment for our souls, and shelter for our spirits. Come, my children, gather around me while we praise Jehovah together. [Reads Psalm 51.]

[CURTAIN.]

STORY 6

DOWN THROUGH THE ROOF

CHARACTERS.

ELAH, CLETUS } Boys of Capernaum.
BENJAMIN—A Paralytic.
ZERAH—Paralytic's Father.
HOMUS—Their Neighbor.
TRAVELER.

SCENES OF THE STORY.

SCENE I.—A roadway near Capernaum.

SCENE II.—Yard in front of Simon's house in Capernaum.

SCENE III.—The same, a half-hour later.

COSTUMES.

ELAH, CLETUS and BENJAMIN—Elah and Cletus are about seventeen and nineteen. Benjamin is a little older. They wear white tunics of knee length, made without sleeves.

ZERAH, HOMUS and TRAVELER—Men of middle age, with dark beards. They wear flowing robes of white, with overdraperies of red, blue, purple or brown.

All characters wear sandals, which can be made from slipper soles tied to the feet with strips of cloth.

Scene I.—A Roadway Near Capernaum.

(Elah and Cletus are seated under a palm-tree.)

Cletus—'Tis a wonderful tale, my Elah, but I must needs believe it, since I have thee before mine eyes.

Elah (sadly)—And to think that thou hast not seen Him. But thou wilt see Him when He returns to Capernaum. Oh, Cletus, I love Him so—better than any one in the whole world!

Cletus—Better than thy mother, boy?

Elah—Yea, better than mother; and yet I love mother more than ever before, and thee also, Cletus. *He* loves every one. I wish you could have seen His face when He healed me. I was half afraid to look when I heard His voice, but no one could turn from the glory of that face. It shined as a light from heaven. It was radiant with understanding.

Cletus—Hast thou had speech with Him since He healed thee?

Elah—Nay, for He always is surrounded with crowds, and perchance they need Him more than I. So many would speak with Him that I know not how He findeth time to take food. But I have followed Him day by day in Capernaum, until He left to make a circuit of the lake with the fishermen who follow Him at all times.

Cletus—What fishermen dost thou mean?

Elah—They be Simon, with his brother Andrew, also James and John, sons of Zebedee. Dost thou know them?

Cletus—I know who they are, for I oftentimes have seen them fishing on the lake, and once one of them spoke kindly to me.

Elah—They do not fish now. They have given it up that they may not leave the Healer. I heard the people talk of it. A rabbi in the crowd said: "Good people, this man selecteth strange disciples, does he not?" But the people paid no attention to him, for they were too busy talking of all that they had seen and heard.

Cletus (chuckling)—Then, the rabbis love Him not? They be jealous for their own teaching—the canting hypocrites! I have heard them standing in the market-places, droning out their long prayers. They must needs draw their robes about them for fear I should pollute them with a touch. But who cometh hither?

(Enter Zerah and Homus, with Benjamin on a cot.)

Homus (resting himself)—I say, my lads, thou lookest to have sturdy backs; wilt thou not help us with our burden? [Cletus and Elah arise.] Thou seest that we have undertaken to carry this young man to the house of Simon the fisherman. It is there that Jesus of Nazareth abideth, and we hope that He may be able to heal him. But the lad's father here is an old man and hath not the strength to proceed farther, so we can go neither forward nor back unless thou wilt help us.

Elah (coming forward)—We will help thee gladly, for I am one that the Master hath healed. [Men stare at him.]

Homus—And of what did He heal thee?

Elah—I was a cripple like to the lad here.

Zerah (eagerly)—A father's blessing will be upon thee both, if my poor boy can find the Healer.

Benjamin (groaning)—Oh, father, what is the need of it all? Hath not the priest told me over and over

again that I suffer on account of my sins, and that I must needs bear it, for it is laid upon me by the Almighty?

Zerah—Ah, the rabbis, the rabbis! I know they have told thee that, but I know also that thou art a good lad who hast done no sin. I am thinking that, were the Almighty so minded, He could put us all on our beds, and justly, for we have all gone astray. There is not one righteous—no, not one.

Cletus (nodding)—Verily, verily.

Elah—It is even as thou sayest. But hath thy son been long in this way?

Zerah—Since he was eight years of age. He was run over by a Roman chariot at a heathen festival in Tiberias, where we lived at that time. But the rabbis declare that he is suffering for sin. And he hath been so patient. Thou knowest, lads, that David hath said in one of his Psalms: "Like as a father pitieth his children, so Jehovah pitieth them that fear him." And I know He must pity my poor, patient lad.

Elah (eagerly)—Wilt thou say that for me again?

Zerah (amazed)—Dost thou not know the Scriptures, boy? At thy age I could repeat the Psalms and much of the law.

Elah—Nay, but my father is a Greek, and I have not been taught.

Zerah—Then, thou art a heathen! But I know by thy face that thou art a good lad, and I am not stiff-necked like the rabbis. It hath been reported that the Nazarene doth teach and heal all who come to Him, even publicans and sinners.

Elah—'Tis a true report, for I was a cripple and He healed me. He did not ask me if I knew the

Psalms, nor the law, nor whether I went to the synagogue. He simply asked me, "Believest thou that I am able to do this?" and when I replied so, He said, "Go in peace." But dost thou think that the Father who pitieth the children is the Father He speaks of so often?

Zerah—Assuredly. He also is the God of Abraham, of Isaac and of Jacob.

Elah (innocently)—And who are they?

Zerah—Oh, boy, thou art indeed a heathen! Thou must go to the synagogue and hear the reading of the Scriptures.

Elah—I will do that. Thou knowest that I could not until lately, for I was helpless.

Traveler (approaching from Capernaum)—What hast thou there? A sick man?

Zerah—My son is a cripple and we seek the great Healer in Capernaum yonder.

Traveler (shaking head)—Well, 'twere better to take him home again, for he will not be healed tonight. The Master is in an upper chamber in Simon's house, and is talking with the rabbis, the priests and the Pharisees, who have come from all parts, even from Jerusalem, to hear Him. The house is packed with people and not one of you could find room, to say nothing of that bed. [Exit.]

Homus—Humph! I had not thought to carry him both ways.

Zerah (wringing his hands)—O Benjamin, my son! my son! I fear that we must take thee home unhealed.

Elah—Nay, nay, I know that we can find a way. Let us go hither. [They pick up bed and exit.]

[CURTAIN.]

SCENE II.—BEFORE THE HOUSE OF SIMON.

(A light is shining from the windows. Elah and Cletus enter with Benjamin on the cot, followed by Zerah and Homus.)

Zerah—I fear that we can not see Him, even though we came so far. My poor boy! My poor boy!

Elah—Nay, I know that we can find Him if we try. Cletus, wilt thou go and see if there be not some way to get in? [He goes. Elah kneels beside the bed.] Did the jolting of the bed hurt thee, my friend?

Benjamin—Nay, the jolting hurteth me not as doth my sinful soul. He can not heal me, I am so sinful, so wicked.

Elah (spreading his arms)—Dost thou see me? I am a heathen—thy father hath said so—yet He healed me. He healed Philip, the blind man whose eyes had been burned out, for what I know not, but he was a sinner. He hath healed multitudes, none of them priests, nor rabbis, nor Pharisees. He will heal thee also, as thou shortly wilt know

Benjamin (staring at Elah)—Art thou an angel?

Zerah—Nay, nay, lad. He is not an angel. He is only a heathen lad, as he truly saith, for he knoweth not Abraham, Isaac and Jacob. But for all that, he is a good lad. Thou must cheer up, for it is true that the Nazarene hath healed greater sinners than even thou, my poor child.

Cletus (returning)—There seemeth no way but the stairs here on the side of the house, which lead to the roof. I thought if we could take him up there we might perhaps lift up a piece of the tiling and lower him into the room where the Master is talking. I can

repair it again in an hour, if one of you will help me.

Elah (eagerly)—Oh, Cletus, 'tis a good thought. Let us go at once.

Zerah—Hold! What right have we to injure our neighbor's roof? It savoreth of unlawfulness. Then, too, would it not be unseemly to thus disturb the Master, especially since He is discoursing with so many learned men?

Benjamin (sobbing)—Oh, father, if thou takest me back now, I feel that I can never come again. I feel the springs of life failing within me, even now.

Elah—Let us try it, I beg of thee!

Zerah—Well, well! It will do no harm to make the attempt. I will recompense Simon for the roof.

(They climb the stairway with the invalid.)

[CURTAIN.]

SCENE III.—THE SAME, A HALF-HOUR LATER.

(The two boys and three men come from door of house.)

Benjamin (stretching his arms and leaping about)—Praise Jehovah, I am healed of my weakness!

Zerah (putting arm around him)—Verily, thou art become a strong man, my son. Now thou dost know what faith will do for thee.

Benjamin—He did not give me any medicine, but only said: "Thy sins are forgiven thee."

Elah—It was even thus that He spake when I was healed.

Zerah—None but the Son of God could perform such a miracle.

Homus—Didst thou hear how the people rebuked Him when He said, "Thy sins are forgiven thee"?

Benjamin (nodding)—They also expected Him to give some demonstration of His power, but He declared that it was spoken so that they might know He had the power to forgive sins, as well as to perform a great miracle.

Zerah—Then He simply bade thee to arise, take up thy couch and go unto thy house.

Benjamin—Therefore let us make haste to proclaim His saving power to all who have sinned, and to all who are afflicted. [All exeunt.]

[CURTAIN.]

STORY 7

THE MAGIC TOUCH

CHARACTERS

ADAH—A Widow of Jerusalem.
RACHEL—Adah's Daughter.
ENOS—Adah's Son.
ASHER—Their Servant.
SEVERAL WOMEN SERVANTS.
A COMPANY OF PILGRIMS.

SCENES OF THE STORY.

SCENE I.—A house in Jerusalem; a quest of faith.

SCENE II.—A valley near Jerusalem, three years later; the outcasts.

SCENE III.—A hillside near Jerusalem, an hour later; rewards of faith.

COSTUMES.

ADAH—In Scene I. she wears a flowing robe of light blue, with a band of ribbon around her forehead. In Scenes II. and III. she wears a gown of dark brown, with white scarf over head, which falls over her shoulders. Her hair, long and gray, falls in two strands on each side of her face. The face and arms should be heavily powdered, with dark circles under the eyes, to give the effects of emaciation.

RACHEL—In Scene I. she wears a flowing robe of pink, girded at the waist, and may have a ribbon and a flower in her hair. In remaining scenes she is dressed similarly to Adah.

ENOS—A man of about twenty-five years. In Scene I. he wears a white robe, like a woman's night-dress, reaching half-way between knees and ankles. Over this is a rich, red scarf, draped over left shoulder and tied at right side of the waist-line. In remaining scenes he may wear the same costume, but, if possible, change the scarf to one of different color, such as dark blue. His legs are bare and he wears sandals.

ASHER—Also a young man, with tunic of tan-colored toweling reaching just below the knees and girded at the belt. It has no sleeves. He wears a turban of light-green cloth.

WOMEN SERVANTS—Costume similar to that of Asher, with head-scarfs of bright colors falling over the shoulders.

PILGRIMS—Men, women and children. The men are dressed as is Enos, and the women wear flowing gowns of various colors, with head-scarfs of contrasting colors. The children wear tunics of knee length; ordinary house dresses will serve the purpose. They have bare legs, with sandals. Some of the men may wear beards. All have palm branches and flowers, the former being obtained from a florist or funeral director.

SCENE I.—ROOM IN A HOUSE IN JERUSALEM.

(It is elegantly furnished with rich draperies and carved furniture. Rich rugs and vases of flowers also may be used. Adah and Rachel are seated, the latter

playing upon a small harp. Enos enters after them, unobserved, and stands, listening.)

Enos (approaching them at conclusion of song)—Very pretty, my sister, very pretty. But why the sadness of thy voice?

Rachel—Because of the sorrow in my heart, dear brother.

Enos (sitting on a stool near them)—Pray, what is there to cause thee sorrow? A dozen suitors for thy hand and wealth abundant here in the house of our father. Should any maiden be happier? Is it not so, mother?

Adah (weeping)—Oh, Enos, my son! How can I tell thee of our affliction! [Falls upon her knees.]

Enos (attempting to embrace her)—Why, mother—

Adah (drawing back)—Do not touch me, beloved; I am a—leper!

Enos (stammering)—A—leper?

Adah (nodding convulsively)—Even so; the plague is upon us.

Enos (attempting again to lift her)—Mother, it can not be true.

Adah (crawling from him)—Touch me not, my son, beloved!

Enos (to Rachel, who is weeping)—Sister, what meaneth this?

Rachel (drawing back)—Do not touch me, brother, for I too am a—leper. [Breaks down and sobs.]

Enos (perplexed)—Mother, sister, I do not understand thee. Surely thou art not jesting in so serious a matter?

Adah (recovering herself)—Nay, beloved, we do not jest. [Showing her hand.] See? See? It is the

terrible plague come upon us. For many weeks I have feared it, and to-day— [Breaks down again.]

Enos—Mother! I am listening to thee. [Attempts again to lift her.]

Adah (drawing back)—I beg thee, do not touch me! [Rachel comes and tries to comfort her and they caress each other.] We are unclean!

Rachel—To-day we went to the doctors.

Enos—The doctors said that you both have leprosy?

Rachel (sobbing and showing her ear)—The white spot which I thought was a scar—they said it is leprosy.

Adah—Soon we will be outcasts and must beg by the wayside.

Rachel—Oh, mother, we can not; let us die!

Adah (shaking her head)—Nay; the Lord has appointed our time and we are believers in the Lord. We will serve Him even in our affliction.

Enos—Why shouldst thou beg by the wayside, when we have wealth in abundance? We will pay the doctors a great price to cure thee.

Adah—Ah! but money can not buy a cure for leprosy. There is no cure for leprosy.

Enos (dropping on a bench)—'Tis even so; there is no cure for leprosy. Never, since the day when Elisha cured Naaman, has it been done. Would God that the prophet Elisha were with us now.

Rachel (eagerly)—It is reported that a prophet greater even than Elisha is come to us.

Enos and Adah (together)—The Nazarene?

Rachel—Aye, the Nazarene.

Adah—Oh, my son, dost thou think that He could heal us?

Enos—It is reported that He worketh great miracles in Galilee.

Adah—Dost thou think that He is a sorcerer?

Enos—I can not say, for I have not seen Him nor His works. It is only reports that have come to Jerusalem, and the priests and rabbis are much wrought up over it. Some even declare that He is the Messiah.

Adah (eagerly)—Perhaps He is the Messiah. When I was a little girl there came a story that He was born, but only a few believed it. By this time He should be a man.

Rachel—Dost thou think that we could find Him?

Adah—I would crawl in the dust to reach Him if He would heal me.

Rachel—Even so would I.

Enos—It is reported that He is in Galilee. If thou dost have such faith in Him, then will I depart this hour [rises] to fetch Him hither.

Adah—O beloved! [Rises.] Tell Him that we will pay a great price—yea, even all the possessions which thy father hath left us will I give if He will heal us.

Enos (girding himself)—Only have faith and courage, and I will make all speed to seek Him. [Stops suddenly.] But hold! If the Roman guards learn of this plague within our dwelling, they will cast thee forth to wander in the hills and vales outside the gates, and thou wilt then need to beg alms by the wayside.

Adah—Not even the servants know of our affliction, beloved. Only the doctors who examined us to-day are aware of it. And they warned us to seek other quarters before our plight is discovered. Perchance if thou dost go quickly and good fortune attend thee, we will not need to leave our home.

Enos—It is a long journey to Capernaum, where it is reported the Nazarene now abides, but I will persuade our good servant Asher to accompany me, and with the fleetest horses which we can secure we shall soon be returning. Guard thyself closely and pray that Jehovah will attend us. [Bows before her on one knee, as if for a blessing.]

Adah (with clasped hands)—Jehovah bless thee and keep thee: Jehovah make His face to shine upon thee, and be gracious unto thee: Jehovah lift up His countenance upon thee, and give thee peace. [Enos rises and leaves.]

[CURTAIN.]

SCENE II.—A VALLEY OUTSIDE JERUSALEM, THREE YEARS LATER.

(Near the center is a well, made from the frame of a packing-box, about three feet square and two feet high. A one-foot step surrounds it, all being covered with gray canvas or paper and painted to represent stones. Several palm-trees may be placed near. Adah and Rachel are huddled at right, with a water-jar beside them. They attempt to approach the well for water, but are driven back by servants of the rich, who enter from left, one at a time, fill their jars and exit.)

A Servant (tossing a pebble at them)—Get thee back, vile scum of the earth! When wilt thou learn thy place? [Fills jar and leaves.]

Rachel (moaning)—I must have water, mother, though but a drop.

Adah—Have patience, child; we will get it shortly. [Watches her chance and crawls up to the well, hastily

fills her jar and returns to the girl.] Here, my daughter; this will refresh thy burning lips.

Rachel—Oh, mother, it seems more than I can bear. Is there no help?

Adah (petting her)—Be quiet, dear. We will find peace—soon. God is good. We have prayed to Him at every sounding of the trumpets in the temple. Somebody will save us. Let us keep faith.

Rachel—Oh, mother, I try to be brave. Your suffering must be even greater than mine, and I do so want to live for you and brother. I wonder if he will ever find us.

Adah (nodding)—Even though three years have passed since he left us and we were driven forth from our home by the officers before he returned with the great Prophet to heal us, I still have faith that he will come. Some one will meet him and tell him where we are, for we have revealed our misfortune to scores of travelers and servants.

Rachel—Dost thou think he would know us if he should meet us?

Adah—He might not know us, but we would know him.

(Rachel falls into a light slumber in her mother's arms, while servants and travelers pass to and fro, guarding themselves from the lepers by calling, "Beware! Unclean!")

Enos (entering with Asher)—Here is a well, Asher. Wilt thou draw us a drink? [Asher obeys.]

Asher (while they are drinking)—Look! yonder are some poor lepers. Could it be—

Enos—Nay, they are old women. I never saw them before.

Adah (who has been listening to their voices, crawls forward a few feet and calls faintly)—Enos!

Enos (turning)—Who calls me?

Adah—Do you not know me? Did you not come for me? [Rises.]

Enos (approaching her)—Mother! Is it thou? Praise God that I have found you at last!

Adah (drawing back)—Stay! Come not nearer! Unclean! Unclean! [But Enos ignores her warnings and folds her to his breast.] Now, see what you have done, Enos! Is it by such disobedience that you prove your love for us? Now you, too, are lost from the world and your friends. The ban of the law is upon you, too; you can not return to Jerusalem. And what will become of us? Oh, my son, my son!

Rachel (arousing from her stupor)—Enos!

Enos—Is that Rachel, mother?

Adah—Aye, it is thy sister. [He starts toward her.] Hold, beloved! I forbid you to touch her. Oh, I forget; it is already too late. [He lifts Rachel to her feet and embraces her.] You must remain and share our doom.

Enos—Nay, dear mother, I am not doomed. I do not fear thee, for I am a herald of Him who speaketh only a word to such as thou, and they are healed.

Adah (eagerly)—Thou hast found the Messiah?

Enos—Verily, I have found Him—the one I sought three years ago to heal thee.

Adah—I knew that thou wouldst come some day, my son. [They sit.] But the years have seemed an eternity.

Enos—I returned to Jerusalem within a week to bring thee glad tidings that there was hope for thee,

but I found only the servants mourning thy absence, following thy banishment by the Roman officials.

Adah—Aye, thou hadst been gone but a day when they came and thrust us from out our dwelling. I pleaded with them upon my knees, but it availed nothing. So for nearly three years we have roamed these hills and vales, hoping and believing that thou wouldst some day find us. Now we know that God has heard our prayers.

Enos—And Jesus, His Son, the Messiah, will restore thee to health again. This very day He will pass yonder [points] on His way to the city. I will take thee to meet Him.

Adah—How dost thou know that He is the Messiah?

Enos—Because I have followed Him for many months. I have heard Him speak and have witnessed His works.

Adah—Then, thou dost not think that He is a sorcerer?

Enos—Nay, beloved, for sorcery could never work such miracles as He has wrought. What would you say if you saw a man multiply seven loaves and two fishes into enough to feed five thousand people?

Adah—You saw Him do that?

Enos—Aye, and ate of the bread and fish. Also, what would you say of a man in whom there is such healing virtue that the sick have but to touch the hem of His garment to be cured, or cry to Him afar off?

Adah—It has never been done by any one before.

Enos—As we came from Jericho, two blind men by the wayside called to the Nazarene and He touched their eyes and they saw. Then a palsied man was brought, and He merely said, "Go unto thy house,"

and the man went away cured. What say you to that?

Adah—It is not given me to say.

Enos—But there are greater things than these. Tell me, has any one to your knowledge ever undone the work of death?

Adah—I never heard of such.

Enos—Well, we were down at Nain and just entering the gate when a company came out bearing a dead man, so we stopped to let them pass. There was a woman crying, for it was her only son. The face of the Nazarene softened with pity and He spoke to her, then touched the bier, saying: "Young man, I say unto thee, Arise!" And instantly the dead man sat up and talked.

Adah—No one but God could give such power to any one.

Enos—But listen to this. On the way hither I saw something even more marvelous. In Bethany there was a man named Lazarus, who, it seems, was a close friend of the Nazarene. Not long ago he died and was buried in a tomb, sealed with a great stone. After he had lain four days, the Nazarene heard of it, and, coming to the place, ordered the stone removed. Then He spoke in a loud voice, "Lazarus, come forth!" and it was even so. The company who watched it were amazed. The man lives to-day as a witness of the thing.

Rachel—Such a thing was never heard before in all Israel.

Enos—But I have not told thee all. While I was with Him in Galilee, a leper came to Him and said: "Lord, if thou wilt, thou canst make me clean." He

heard the cry and touched the outcast with His hand, saying, "Be thou clean," and immediately the scales and sores left him, so that he became healthy as I am to-day.

Adah (eagerly)—And he was a—leper?

Enos (nodding)—Then, again, ten lepers came to Him one day, and, falling at His feet, cried: "Master, have mercy on us!" He said unto them, "Go, and show yourselves unto the priests," as the law requires; and before they were come there they were healed.

Rachel and Adah (eagerly)—They were healed?

Enos (nodding)—On the way their infirmity left them, so there was no evidence of it except their polluted clothes.

Adah—Then, thou dost still believe that there is hope for us?

Enos—I am sure of it, if thou hast the strength and faith to go and meet Him. Very soon will He be coming.

Adah—Then, let us hasten, lest He pass us by. [Enos assists them to arise and they start to leave left.]

[CURTAIN.]

SCENE III.—A HILLSIDE NEAR JERUSALEM AN HOUR LATER.

(Use the same setting as before, with well removed and palms rearranged. Adah, Rachel and Enos enter from right.)

Rachel (sinking beneath a tree)—Oh, mother, my legs are breaking!

Adah (sinking beside her)—Have courage, beloved. Remember that we are going to find life and health.

Look at the flash of gold on the temple. [Points.] Do you remember how we worshiped there? Will it not be pleasant to do so again?

Rachel—Yes, but go thou on with Enos and leave me here.

Adah—No, no, Rachel. What would we gain if I should be healed without you?

Enos—Just remain here in the shade of the tree. I will run forward to meet Him. [Shading his eyes and looking off to the left.] Even now He approaches and the people are swarming in His direction to welcome Him. [Exit.]

(A company of men and women pass across the stage from right, each carrying a palm branch. In the distance can be heard the song of the multitude: "Hosanna to the son of David: Blessed is he that cometh in the name of the Lord." It is repeated with increased volume. People continue to pass hurriedly across the platform to join the company.)

Adah (looking eagerly)—He is coming! The people are going out from the city to meet Him! [After a pause:] Lord, have mercy upon us! [The shouts of the people almost drown out her cries.] Come, Rachel, we must get nearer! [Drags Rachel to near extreme left.]

One of the Pilgrims—Beware of the lepers! the lepers! the lepers!

Another—Stone them! Kill them! [Throws pebbles.]

Adah (with outstretched arms)—O Master, have mercy upon us! Thou seest our need! Thou canst make us clean!

(The approach of the Messiah is represented by a light.)

Voice of the Lord—Dost thou believe I am able to do this?

Adah—Verily, thou art the Messiah, the Son of God.

Voice—Woman, great is thy faith. As thou hast asked, be it done unto thee.

(The two women rub their hands over their faces, brushing off some of the pallor and making as much of a change as possible in their appearance, unobserved by the audience.)

Adah (rising with clasped hands)—Glory to God in the highest! And thanks evermore to His holy Son!

Rachel (rising also)—Yea, blessed be His holy name!

Adah—O daughter, we are saved! saved! saved!

(They fall upon their knees, with bowed heads and clasped hands, while in the distance the multitude can be heard singing. Enos enters and stands, watching them a moment.)

Enos—Mother! Sister! Is it really thou?

Adah (forgetting)—Unclean! Unclean! Come not nearer, my son!

Enos (kneeling with them, his arms around them)—Dost thou not know that thou art clean again? The Master hath healed thee.

Adah—Verily, it is so. [Looks at her arms.] Let us begin our new life by giving thanks to Him who hath led us to this day. [They bow in prayer.]

[CURTAIN.]

STORY 8

FOR THIRTY PIECES OF SILVER

CHARACTERS.

Caiaphas—The High Priest.
Annas—His Adviser.
Nicodemus, Jochanan, Joseph } Members of Sanhedrin.
Judas Iscariot—A Disciple of the Nazarene.
Other Members of the Sanhedrin.
A Guard.

SCENES OF THE STORY.

Scene I.—In the council chamber; a bargain for blood.

Scene II.—A street near the palace; settlement with a traitor.

Scene III.—Same as Scene I.; repentance of a traitor.

COSTUMES.

Caiaphas—Man of middle age, with dark hair and beard. Flowing robe of white, with cloak of purple. High turban of white.

ANNAS—An older man, with white hair and beard. Flowing robe of white, with cloak of yellow, edged with purple. High turban of white.

MEMBERS OF SANHEDRIN—Dark robes, with over-draperies of contrasting colors. Hoods and turbans of various colors. Some with white and some with dark beards. (Women may take the parts of members who have no speaking parts.)

JUDAS—Man of middle age, with dark hair and beard. Flowing robe of dark material, with over-drapery of contrasting color. Hood of dark color.

GUARD—Young man, without beard. Tunic of tan toweling, with cape of brown hanging from back of shoulders. Helmet made of an old derby hat painted white, with paper, fan-shaped ornament in front. Bare legs and sandals. Shield and spear.

SCENE I.—THE COUNCIL CHAMBER OF THE SANHEDRIN.

(Arrange setting as elaborately as possible, with rich draperies and Oriental furniture. Annas and Caiaphas sit on an elevated platform at left. There is a long desk or pulpit in front of them and a canopy over them. Members of the Sanhedrin are seated down in front of them.)

Caiaphas—Blasphemer! He shall be crushed! Have I not vowed it—I, Caiaphas, the high priest? He shall not defy me longer!

Annas—We have dealt gently with this matter too long already. The man must be put out of the way, and that speedily. For three years now He hath been spreading His vile teachings. If we let Him thus alone, all men will believe on Him, and the Romans will come and take away both our place and nation.

Nicodemus (rising in the council)—I am not in favor of putting the man to death, for in my opinion He hath done nothing worthy of such a sentence.

Caiaphas (passionately)—Thou knowest nothing at all, nor dost consider that it is expedient for us that one man should die for the people and that the whole nation perish not.

Nicodemus—Thou art the high priest and Jehovah speaketh through the words of thy mouth. But God forbid that we put an innocent man to death. For my part, I will have nothing further to do with the thing.

Annas (rising)—We have long suspected that thou art one of His disciples. Thou art therefore out of place in the council of the Sanhedrin. [Pointing to door.] Go hence, and join thy illustrious Master, the carpenter! [Nicodemus exits majestically, amidst applause.]

Jochanan—Now, as to the case of this fellow Lazarus, in Bethany, who has been making such a stir, what think ye? It seemeth to me that he were better off in the tomb from which he was taken. If he was indeed dead, then was it the will of God, and he should have remained so. We shall not be doing unlawfully if we carry out upon him the sentence of death which Jehovah had Himself already imposed.

Annas—Thou hast spoken wisely. It is more than probable that his body is now animated by a devil, which thus speaketh blasphemously through the flesh. He should be put out of the way speedily, for he leadeth many people after him.

Joseph—Let the man Lazarus alone. I know him well and he is a just man. I have also seen him since his resurrection from the dead, if so it was. He hath

not a devil, and, realizing that he came out from the grave, he justly praiseth God.

Annas—That matter can be discussed later, for now we must concern ourselves regarding the actions of the Nazarene teacher. Can any one inform me of His whereabouts?

Caiaphas—He still abideth in Bethany, so I am informed by one of my servants, but undoubtedly He will be in Jerusalem for the feast. He must be seized in secret, that there be no uproar among the people. And there must also be some evidence secured against Him, which shall bring Him under Roman jurisdiction. For, as ye know, this tribunal hath not the power to put any man to death.

Annas—Verily, we must seek to ally ourselves to the Romans in every way within our power. If this man Jesus can be convicted of plotting against the Government, our work practically will be done. We can then deliver Him over to Pilate, assured that He will be properly dealt with. [Knocking at door.]

Caiaphas (angrily)—Who dareth to interrupt our deliberations? But stay! It must be something of importance! Guard, wilt thou open to the visitor?

Guard (after opening door and speaking to man outside)—'Tis one of the followers of the Nazarene. He would speak with the high priest.

Annas (to Caiaphas)—Wilt thou not command that he be brought before us? It may be that he hath repented of his allegiance to the Nazarene, and, if so, he might be disposed to give us timely assistance.

Caiaphas (to guard)—Let him be brought in.

(Guard admits Judas, who glides forward, frightened.)

Annas—Wilt thou come forward, man, and acquaint us with thy desires?

Judas (hoarsely)—Art thou the high priest?

Caiaphas (impatiently)—I am the high priest, fellow! What wouldst thou ask of me? Is it in regard to the Nazarene?

Judas (brightening)—Aye, it is so. I can no longer abide His presence. It hath been made known to me that thou art His enemy, therefore am I come. But I want money! What wilt thou give me to betray Him into thy hands?

Caiaphas (rising eagerly)—What will I give thee? Why, man—

Annas (interrupting him)—Let me manage the fellow, my son, for I understand this sort as thou dost not. [To Judas:] It were not worth a great sum, assuredly, my good man, since we already know where He is to be found. Still, thou mayest be of assistance to us, and we are disposed to be generous. [Looks over the room and sees nods of approval.] What sayest thou to twenty pieces of silver?

Judas—'Tis too little. Thou knowest not His haunts as I do.

Annas—True. I therefore will increase the amount by half. Deliver Him into our hands safely, at a time when there shall be no uproar of the people, and we will give thee thirty pieces of silver. [Judas shuffles on his feet and looks cautiously around.] Thou must decide quickly, for we are considering other plans. Wilt thou accept our offer or not? Thy Master is doomed in any event.

Judas—Well, I will do it. 'Tis a small sum, but I am a poor man. I have wasted many months in

following this Jesus. I thought Him to be the Messiah, but He is not—He is not—He is not.

Annas—Thou hast not told us thy name.

Judas—My name is Judas Iscariot. I am one of the Twelve who are always with Him.

Annas (rubbing his hands)—Well, my good man, it is very important that the Nazarene should suspect nothing of all this. Therefore go back and attend with Him as usual, till such a time as thou canst safely deliver Him into our hands. And the silver shall be paid thee immediately thereafter. [Giving him a coin.] This is a pledge of the promise we have made.

Judas (fiercely)—Thou shalt have Him! Do not doubt it.

[CURTAIN.]

SCENE II.—A SIDE STREET NEAR THE PALACE ON PASSOVER NIGHT.

(Arrange a drop curtain in front of Scene I. Dim light. Judas and Annas enter from opposite sides, each carrying a lantern.)

Annas—Aha! thou art indeed timely in thy appointments. Verily, thou art a shrewd fellow, and much to be commended for the discreet way in which thou hast managed this affair.

Judas (hoarsely)—The soldiers delivered the Nazarene safely into thy hands?

Annas (nodding)—Yea, even now they are questioning Him before the high priest. The thirty pieces of silver are thine. [Gives money-bag.] Take them and be gone. We have no further need of thy services. [Exit hurriedly.]

Judas (thrusts bag into a pocket, stands a moment gazing after Annas, then clasps hands in despair)—God, what have I done! [Exit.]

[CURTAIN.]

SCENE III.—SAME AS SCENE I.

(Annas and Caiaphas on the rostrum, with members of Sanhedrin seated down in front.)

Caiaphas—I have called this assembly of the council that we might take some action regarding the continued workers of iniquity within our city, for, though we have accomplished the death of the Nazarene, His followers still are with us. With the trunk of the poisonous vine we also must burn the branches, lest they bud anew.

Annas—Thou hast the tongue of wisdom, my lord.

Caiaphas—They already are spreading reports that the man is alive again and that He has been seen by them. But it is all blasphemy. [Knocking at door. He turns angrily to guard.] Again are we disturbed in our deliberations. Wilt thou enquire who the intruder might be?

Guard (after speaking to man outside)—It is the same fellow who came hither not long since and agreed to deliver the Nazarene unto thee.

Caiaphas—Aha! perchance he hath some further plans for us. We will hear him now.

Judas (slouching forward)—Oh, my lord, the bargain which I did make with thee hath choked the breath of life from me; I have sinned in that I have betrayed innocent blood.

Caiaphas (sternly)—What is that to us? See thou to it!

Judas (throwing bag of money on the desk)—It burneth me with its touch! Use it as thou wilt! [Rushes out.]

(Members of Sanhedrin look at each other in surprise.)

Annas—Verily, the fellow hath repented of his work. [Laughs.] They all are cowards!

Caiaphas—But, my lord, what shall we do with the money?

Annas (solemnly)—Verily, it is not lawful to put it into the treasury, because it is the price of blood.

Jochanan (rising)—If I may be heard, my lord, I would say that these pieces of silver may yet serve us. Thou knowest that there be many strangers who die within our city, and it has been a question as to what disposition shall be made of them. Therefore let us take this silver and buy us a field outside the city which will serve as a burying-ground for all such. [Nods of approval from Sanhedrin.]

Caiaphas—Thy counsel is most wise, my brother. And I also see signs of approval from our holy assembly. To make it legal, I will call for the raised hands of those who agree. [All members raise hands; Caiaphas nods.] Therefore it shall be so arranged.

[CURTAIN.]

STORY 9

DELIVERED FROM PRISON

CHARACTERS.

JOEL, OBED } Pilgrims from the Desert.
PETER, JOHN } Apostles of Jesus.
ANNAS—The High Priest.
SAUL—A Pharisee from Tarsus.
CHILION—The Prison Warden.
CALEB—Chief of the Guards.
GAMALIEL—A Teacher of the Law.
TWO PRISON GUARDS.
MEMBERS OF THE SANHEDRIN.
ANGEL OF THE LORD.

SCENES OF THE STORY.

SCENE I.—In the prison at Jerusalem; freedom.

SCENE II.—In the council chamber next morning; consternation.

SCENE III.—The same, two hours later; trial and sentence.

COSTUMES.

JOEL AND OBED—Men of middle age. Costume of the Arab. Flowing robes of bright cloth, with shawls

of striped material. Head covered with square of bright-striped cloth, which is held in place by a cord and falls to the shoulders. Short, dark beards. Sandals.

PETER AND JOHN—Flowing robes of white, with overdraperies of bright colors. Peter is the older, with dark hair and short, dark beard. Sandals.

ANNAS—Robe of white, with cloak of purple, edged with yellow satine. High turban of white, with band of purple and gold. Short, white beard.

SAUL AND GAMALIEL—Costumes similar to those of Peter and John. Saul is a young man, with dark hair and short, dark beard. Gamaliel has long, white hair and beard.

CHILION AND CALEB—Tunics of tan-colored toweling, edged with Roman design in purple and gold. Capes of purple and gold are fastened to back of shoulders and reach to knees. Helmets, shields and spears. Bare legs and sandals with high laces.

PRISON GUARDS—Costumes similar to above, without capes.

MEMBERS OF SANHEDRIN—Have as many as possible. Flowing robes of dark colors, and turbans of dark cloth. Beards of brown or white. (Women may take these parts.)

SCENE I.—A ROOM IN THE PRISON.

(Floor covered with straw. Light very dim. Peter and John chained together at back of room. Joel and Obed at left front.)

Joel—Alas! how have the wicked prevailed against the innocent. We are as birds in the snare of the fowler.

Obed—For what reason we are brought here I know not. I but praised Him by whose name I was healed of my blindness.

Peter—Dost thou not think that He who hath restored thy sight is able likewise to deliver thee from prison?

Obed (drawing toward Joel)—Who is he that speaks, my father?

Joel (to apostles)—Who are our companions in this misery?

Peter—We are the apostles of the Lord Jesus, in whose name we are able to heal those that are sick. By command of the chief priest are we thrust into this place. But praises be to the eternal One that we are counted worthy to do the works which the Lord did, and to be partakers of His sufferings. But how is it that ye are come here with us?

Joel—We are come from the desert to Jerusalem, with the hope that we might find a great Healer who, we were told by travelers, would heal my son of his blindness. But as we entered the city we learned that He had been slain. Footsore and sad, we cast ourselves upon the steps of the temple. Then it was that a young man called Stephen, passing by, laid his hand upon my son, and lo, he received his sight! But as we rejoiced upon our way to the house of friends we were seized by the guards and brought hither. For this shall vengeance overtake them, and I have sworn that I will neither eat bread nor drink wine until I have accomplished my wrath upon them.

John—Nay, my brother, I will show thee a more excellent way. The Lord Jesus, when He was betrayed into the hands of cruel men, though He was endued

with all power from on high, offered no resistance. Even as it is written by the prophet Isaiah: "He was despised, and rejected of men; a man of sorrows and acquainted with grief: . . . he was wounded for our transgressions, he was bruised for our iniquities; the chastisement of our peace was upon him; and with his stripes we are healed. . . . As a lamb that is led to the slaughter, and as a sheep before its shearers is dumb, so he opened not his mouth." Therefore, my brother, if the Lord Jesus could endure suffering with patience, is it just for sinful man to seek vengeance?

Joel—I wish that I had known all these things before. Then would I have come with my tribe like a swift whirlwind out of the desert and would have snatched Him from the hand of the oppressor. In the desert God reigns.

Peter—Doth not God reign over all the earth, for He made it? He told us many times that these things would come to pass, yet, because of our blindness, we heeded Him not. Yea, I even denied that I knew Him, yet He forgave me, as also He will forgive and save all that come unto Him.

Obed—How can He forgive when He is dead? There is no hope in the grave.

Peter—Verily, thou hast not heard how the grave could not hold Him. On the third day He became alive again, as shall also every one that believeth on Him.

(The prison is suddenly flooded with a bright light, as the doors are opened and an angel appears.)

Angel—Go ye, and stand and speak in the temple to the people all the words of this life. [Stands aside while prisoners walk slowly out.]

[CURTAIN.]

Scene II.—Council-room of the Temple Next Morning.

(Make the setting as rich as possible, with Oriental draperies at windows and doors. Annas and Saul are seated upon a rostrum, behind a long desk or table, at one side of room.)

Caleb (entering and bowing)—I am most unhappy, my lords, that I am the bearer of evil tidings. The prisoners whom I was sent to fetch have somehow made their escape during the night.

Annas (angrily)—How is this? Who guarded the prison?

Caleb—The detachment of Chilion, himself in command, my lord. The prison was shut with all safety, and the keepers we found standing outside the doors. But when we had opened there was no one inside.

Saul—A most singular story this, my lord. It will doubtless be found that the fellows reasoned with the keepers during the night watches, for this they do with all men.

Annas (nodding)—The guard Chilion hath been bribed. Fetch him hither and try the effect of a scourging. A bleeding back createth an honest tongue oftentimes, when nothing else will suffice.

(Caleb departs. Draw curtain a few minutes to denote lapse of time. He returns with Chilion and two guards.)

Chilion (wringing his hands)—Oh, my lords, my lords! I am undone! 'Twas by their magic powers that they have done this thing. Thinkest thou that men who can open the eyes of the blind can not also open the doors of a prison?

Annas—Thou hast been drunken in the night, and so the fellows have eluded thee. For this thou shalt answer with a scourging.

Chilion (on his knees)—Nay, my lord, I have neither eaten bread nor tasted wine during the night, and these [points to guards] shall bear me witness. We have stood continually before the doors. It is from within that they have gotten away. But it will be an easy matter to imprison them again, for they are this moment standing in Solomon's porch, teaching the people. [Rises.]

Annas (tearing his hair)—By the eternal gods, is it true?

Saul—May I advise, my lord, that they be apprehended and brought hither at once? We shall then be able to examine them of the truth of this man's statements.

Annas—It is well said, my son. [To guards:] Fetch hither the men, but without show of violence, for they have a great following among the people. [Guards start to leave.]

[CURTAIN.]

SCENE III.—THE SAME, TWO HOURS LATER.

(Members of Sanhedrin also present, seated at one side. Peter and John stand between two guards in front of the rostrum.)

Annas—Again it has become necessary to rebuke you openly because of your blasphemous conduct. Stiff-necked and ignorant fishermen, why is it that ye do thus persist in doing these things, which work only for unrighteousness? Did we not give you strict orders not to teach in this name? Yet ye have defiled Jeru-

salem with your doctrine, and intend to make us responsible for the death of the Nazarene.

Peter—We must obey God rather than man.

Annas—This have ye before declared as the excuse of your disobedience to this most holy council of the people of Israel. Do you think that the God of our fathers speaks no longer, save to fisherfolk, publicans and malefactors? Nay, for upon us doth rest the power of God and the wisdom of God. Therefore must we defend from wicked hands the faith which we have kept unsullied, from the days of our father Abraham even until now.

Peter—We have but one answer to make to this: The God of our fathers raised up Jesus, whom ye slew and hanged on a tree. Him hath God exalted with His right hand to be a Prince and a Saviour, to give Israel repentance and forgiveness of sins. And we are witnesses to the truth of this, and so also is the Holy Spirit, which is the gift of God to those that obey Him.

Annas (jumping up and speaking to council)—Hearest thou these sayings? What is this but foul blasphemy! It is poison of this kind that these fellows spread among the people day by day. The Nazarene a Prince and a Saviour, and we His murderers! Bah! if the people once come to believe this, we shall be overthrown and the whole nation given over to blasphemy and idolatry.

Members of Sanhedrin—We shall be doing God service if we immediately put these fellows to death.

Another—I am of the same mind.

(Others rise, one at a time, and cry, "And I!" "Let them be stoned!" "Give them over to the Romans!")

Gamaliel (rising in midst of council)—I beseech your indulgence, my good lords, that ye may give a brief hearing to one who is still somewhat unfamiliar with these new doctrines.

(Several voices cry, "Gamaliel!" "Let him be heard!")

Gamaliel (after quiet is restored)—I request that persons under discussion be removed for a time.

Annas (nodding)—It will be as thou hast said. [To guards:] Sirs, remove the prisoners. [They are taken out.]

Gamaliel—Men of Israel, as I have listened to the sayings of these men I am about persuaded that to adopt excessive measures for the disruption of this new sect would be not only unwise in the present disturbed state of the populace, but actually dangerous. I have mingled with the multitude and I know whereof I speak. Therefore, take care what ye do with these men. Looking over events of the past, ye recall that not long ago there arose up a certain Theudas, claiming to be a somebody, to whom about four hundred men joined themselves. Yet he was soon killed and his followers speedily scattered and brought to naught. Later, Judas the Galilean appeared in the time of the census and drew many people after him. Yet he, too, perished and all his followers were dispersed. So, in this present case, my advice to you is not to interfere with these men, for, if their preaching and teaching be of human origin, they will speedily come to naught. But, if they be of divine origin, you will be powerless to end them, for ye will then find yourselves in opposition to God.

(Members of council approve with nods and exclamations.)

Annas (rising)—Though I believe that these men and their works are neither of man nor of God, but of the devil, yet do I agree with the worshipful Gamaliel in thinking that our safest course is to let them alone for the present. I will therefore command that they be scourged, after which they shall be released. [To Caleb:] Sir, wilt thou fetch the prisoners again? [They are brought in, still chained to the two guards.] Sirs, after careful consideration, we have agreed to overlook your blasphemous conduct for the present, but only after a good scourging, when thou wilt be released. But there is something that ye must yet answer for. How is it that ye made your escape from the prison? Your guards declare that they stood before the doors throughout the night and heard nothing.

John—The angel of the Lord, whose we are and whom we serve, came and fetched us out, and the eyes of the keepers were holden, that they knew not when we passed them.

Annas—How is it, then, that He who delivered thee from the prison is not able now to deliver thee from our hands?

Peter—We were delivered from the prison that we might speak to the people of Him who is able to save them from their sins. The servant is not above his lord, and if we suffer with Him we shall also reign with Him. He hath gone to prepare a place for us, that where He is there we may be also.

Annas—Verily, let it be known to you that ye are forbidden to speak the name of the crucified Galilean in Jerusalem, or ye shall meet with a punishment to which this shall be as nothing.

[CURTAIN.]

STORY 10

AT THE BEAUTIFUL GATE

CHARACTERS.

OBED—A Lame Man.
PETER, JOHN } Apostles of Jesus.
ANNAS—The High Priest.
ALEXANDER—Kinsman of High Priest.
MEMBERS OF SANHEDRIN.
A TEMPLE PRIEST.
TWO TEMPLE GUARDS.
WORSHIPERS.

SCENES OF THE STORY.

SCENE I.—At the steps of the temple; a wondrous miracle.

SCENE II.—A room in the council chamber; accused and released.

COSTUMES.

OBED—A man of middle age. Wears a tunic made of unbleached muslin or toweling, raveled at the bottom. It is sleeveless and reaches just below the knees. Head is covered with a square of bright cloth, falling to the shoulders and held in place by a coil of cloth. Faded red scarf around his shoulders. Sandals and staff. Dark hair and beard.

Peter and John—Flowing robes of white, with mantles of bright cloth. Caps of contrasting colors, arranged like that of Obed. Both have dark hair. Peter has a short, dark beard.

Annas—Robe of white, with cloak of purple, edged with yellow satine. High turban of white, with band of purple and gold. Short, white beard.

Alexander—Costume similar to Peter's.

Members of Sanhedrin—Flowing robes of dark colors, with beards of brown or white. Turbans of dark colors.

Temple Priest—A plain, white gown with girdle of Persian ribbon and necktie of same. High, white turban, with band of ribbon. Long, white beard.

Temple Guards—Tunics of tan toweling, similar to Obed's, and edged with Roman design in purple and gold. Helmets, shields and spears. Bare legs and sandals with high laces.

Worshipers—Flowing robes of various colors. Members of the Sanhedrin may appear as worshipers.

(Note.—Women may take the parts of Worshipers and Sanhedrinists, wearing the robes of men, with beards also.)

Scene I.—In Front of an Entrance to the Temple.

(Steps leading up to the "Beautiful Gate," or door. Obed, with staff at his side, lies on mat at foot of steps. The worshipers, passing in and out, ignore him. He continues appealing to each one: "Alms, kind worshipers; give alms to a poor, lame man." One or two may drop a coin, which he receives with thanks. Peter and John approach.)

Obed—Sons of Abraham, have mercy, I beseech thee, upon one lame from his birth. Give unto me from

thy Heaven-bestowed bounty and God will recompense thee fourfold.

John—Poor fellow! thou hast been here many days. Who brings thee hither?

Obed—I thank God for friends who bring me here each morn and take me back to my humble home at sunset. Will ye, who are strong and well, help such as I?

Peter—Look on us. Silver and gold have I none; but what I have, that give I thee. In the name of Jesus Christ of Nazareth, walk.

(Obed starts hesitatingly, as if doubting. Then Peter and John each take one of his arms and assist him. He finally stands alone, tries his limbs and jumps around.)

Obed (falling at Peter's feet)—May Jehovah bless thee forever, thou wondrous friend who hath made me whole!

Peter (lifting him up again)—Nay, do not praise me nor bless me, but give thanks to Him who sent me.

Obed—Who art thou? Tell me, for I would know. Maybe ye are angels in the garb of men.

John—Nay, we are but disciples of the crucified One, Jesus of Nazareth. 'Tis by faith in His name that we have been able to heal thee, and not by our own power. Thy praises all should be to Him, and to Him alone.

Obed—Aye, then, to Him will I give all the glory and honor. But who is He, and where shall I find Him?

Peter—He is the Christ, the Son of God, and hath ascended to heaven to be with His Father, but His Spirit is still on earth. Come now with us into the

temple, that thou mayest offer there thy prayer of thanksgiving.

(They start up the steps, but worshipers coming out notice them, exclaiming in amazement.)

First Worshiper—Art thou not the lame man who sat here when I went in? [Obed nods.]

Second Worshiper—Why, I saw thee carried hither by thy friends but a short time since!

Third Worshiper—What hath happened to thee?

(Other worshipers assemble, making a group at foot of steps, with Peter, John and Obed on steps above them.)

Obed—Nay, good people, I know not how 'twas done, but I am healed. Here are the men who performed the miracle; ask them by what power it was done. I am too happy to understand it. [Jumps up, walking and leaping, and praises God, saying, "I am healed!"]

First Worshiper—These men healed thee? Surely thou must be mistaken. They are but poor fishermen, followers of the Nazarene, who some months ago was crucified.

Worshiper (one who has quietly observed the healing steps forward)—Behold, good friends! It was the man yonder [points to Peter] who performed the miracle. It must be that he is most holy and that he hath kept the law without failure, that he can do such marvels.

Peter—Ye men of Israel, why marvel ye at this man? Or why look ye so earnestly upon us, as though by our own power or holiness we had made him to walk? The God of Abraham and of Isaac and of Jacob, yea, the God of our fathers, hath glorified His

Son Jesus, whom ye delivered up and denied before Pilate when he had decided to release Him. Ye rejected the holy and righteous One and asked that a murderer should be granted unto you, but the Giver of life ye killed. Yet hath God raised Him again from the dead, whereof we are witnesses. By faith in His name hath this man been made whole, whom also ye see and have known. And ye are sick in sin, as this man was sick in body. Repent, therefore, and be converted, that your sins may be blotted out when the times of refreshing shall come from the presence of the Lord. And He shall send Jesus Christ unto you. But every soul which will not hear Him shall be destroyed from among the people.

(Some of the worshipers fall at the apostles' feet, shouting for joy, but others cry: "Blasphemers! Sorcerers! Defilers of the temple!")

Priest (who, with two guards, has observed the scene from the door)—What mean ye, blasphemers, that within the sacred precincts of the temple ye do preach in the name of an accursed malefactor the resurrection from the dead? These things must not be! [Comes down steps with guards.] Take these fellows and lock them up until morning, when we may have time to examine them further. [Guards lead Peter, John and Obed away. Priest turns to the people.] And the rest of you go hence [waves arms], and quarrel not on the steps of the Beautiful Gate.

[CURTAIN.]

SCENE II.—A ROOM IN THE COUNCIL CHAMBER.

(Annas seated on rostrum, with guards on each side. He is looking over papers on his desk. Mem-

bers of Sanhedrin are seated in front of him, and filling space apparently back of the scenes to give appearance of large assemblage. Peter, John and Obed are standing at one side, facing group.)

Annas (rising)—This court of the high priest have I called to hear the strange things that transpired yesterday at the steps of the Beautiful Gate. Ye behold in these [points to Peter and John] two men who were prominent followers of the Nazarene, who recently was put to death because of His crimes. Wise men would have taken a warning from the fate of their false Teacher, but these follow in the footsteps of Him who was crucified, not remembering apparently that those footsteps led to the cross. Yesterday there was a tumult raised on the steps of the holy temple when a beggar whom God had justly afflicted, because of the sins of his father, was healed by these men. Such things should not be permitted. [To Peter:] Therefore I command you that ye tell us by what means and by what name ye have done this thing, for I myself have not seen it.

Peter—Ye rulers of the people and elders of Israel, if we this day be examined for the good deed to the impotent man, be it known to you all that, by the name of Jesus the Nazarene, the Messiah, whom ye crucified, but whom God raised from the dead, even by Him doth this man stand here before you whole. This is the stone which was set at naught of you builders, which is become the head of the corner. Neither is there salvation in any other, for there is no other name under heaven given among men whereby we must be saved

(Murmurings among members of Sanhedrin.)

Annas (to guards)—Remove the prisoners, for we must confer in private concerning this thing. [Guards remove prisoners.] What now shall we do with these men?

Alexander—Let them be stoned for blasphemy! Did they not call the crucified Galilean the Messiah and declare that God had raised Him from the dead? This they also preach openly to the people. I am of the opinion that our case is worse than before. The Galilean was but one man, and now we have a thousand in His stead. The thing must be stopped, else will our power be short-lived.

A Member of Sanhedrin—Suppose that we stone them, how, then, are we bettered? The whole city would take up the cry against us, especially the lower classes, who envy us our wealth. Such a course would only add fuel to the flame.

Annas (nodding)—Thou hast spoken wisely. The miracle is a notable one. All Jerusalem knows it now, and we can not deny it. But that it may spread no further among the people, let us straitly threaten them, that they speak henceforth to no man in this name. [To guards:] Fetch now the men. [They are brought in.] We have carefully considered the matter of your doings. The case of healing we are disposed to overlook, for it is not our custom to heal beggars, nor should it be yours, for it savoreth of a compact with the evil one. But the matter of your speaking to the people is far more serious. Do you not know that you have laid yourselves liable to death by stoning? Yet we are merciful and inclined to pardon even this iniquity, on the one condition that from henceforth ye speak to no man in the name of this Jesus.

If ye are now ready to comply with this request, ye shall at once be released.

John—Whether it be right in the sight of God to hearken unto you rather than God, judge ye: for we can not but speak the things which we saw and heard.

Annas (angrily)—Continue to speak, then, and a fate more terrible than stoning shall befall thee. [To guards:] Remove the men and let them go.

Guard—And the beggar, my lord?

Annas—Release him also, but bid him hold his peace concerning his healing, lest a worse thing than lameness come upon him.

[CURTAIN.]

STORY 11

A CAPTAIN'S CONFESSION

CHARACTERS.

CORNELIUS—A Roman Centurion in Cæsarea.
ALIDA—His Wife.
SEVERAL MEN AND WOMEN—His Kinspeople.
TWO SONS OF CORNELIUS.
TWO DAUGHTERS OF CORNELIUS.
A SERVANT.
TWO GUARDS.
SIMON PETER—An Apostle of the Lord.

COSTUMES.

CORNELIUS—Tunic of white toweling, with girdle of gold-colored cloth. Cape of rich brown, lined with gold color, fastened at back of neck and hangs to knees. Brown socks, with sandals laced high over socks. Helmet with fan-shaped ornament in front. An old derby hat, painted white, with ornament made of paper, will do.

SONS OF CORNELIUS—Costume similar to their father, with capes of purple and green. No helmet. They have no speaking part.

GUARDS—Tunics of brown toweling, with capes of brown, made similar to that of Cornelius. Helmets and spears.

PETER—Flowing robe of white, with overdrapery of dark blue, edged with red. White hair and beard.

ALIDA AND HER DAUGHTERS—Flowing gowns of bright colors, with silk scarfs over heads.

KINSMEN—Costumes similar to Peter's. Dark beards.

KINSWOMEN—Costumes similar to Alida's.

SERVANT—Tunic of brown, without any cape. Small turban of light green. Sandals.

SETTING.

The scene is laid in the home of Cornelius in Cæsarea. Walls hung with rich tapestries and floor covered with rugs. Chairs with Oriental coverings. Large vases of pottery and also small potted palms may be used. At back center is an altar made from a table or pulpit desk. On it is a candelabra with very short tapers. Guards stand by doors at opposite sides of room.

First Guard—The hour for morning worship has arrived. Wilt thou, Caleb, summon the household, while I prepare the altar?

Second Guard (saluting)—As thou dost command, my captain. [Gives call on bugle while first guard lights the altar tapers, then both resume places by the doors.]

(Cornelius and all members of his household enter. He kneels before the altar, surrounded by the others, their backs toward the audience.)

Cornelius (with hands uplifted and frequent prostrations to the floor)—"The earth is Jehovah's, and the fulness thereof; the world and they that dwell therein." [Continues reading twenty-fourth Psalm,

followed by forty-sixth Psalm, from scroll on floor before him.]

All Household (with prostrations)—Selah! [All rise.]

Alida—Cornelius, my husband, what think ye of the word that is being passed from lip to lip, declaring that the Messiah is come?

Cornelius—No truth have I established in such reports which have come to me briefly, from time to time. Verily, thou dost know that several men have stood up, each declaring that he was the promised Messiah.

Alida—But the servants have brought word that many wondrous miracles were performed by this man called Jesus, and that after He was crucified He arose from the dead.

Cornelius—Didst thou hear aught of His teaching?

Alida—It is reported that He taught men to love one another and to always help those in need.

Cornelius—That is a doctrine worthy of our consideration and which every one ought to observe.

Alida—He had a company of disciples, so I am told, and they are winning many followers.

Cornelius—Perchance it may be one of these disciples who is to be our guest. Hear all of ye, my beloved family, my kinsfolk and servants, while I tell unto thee a vision that came to me a few days ago.

It was about the ninth hour of the day that I saw in a vision, openly, as it were, an angel of God coming unto me. And when I answered his call, he said: "Cornelius, . . . thy prayers and thine alms are gone up for a memorial before God. And now send men to Joppa, and fetch one Simon, who is surnamed Peter; he lodgeth with one Simon, a tanner, whose house is

by the seaside." So, when the angel was departed, I called two of the servants and a devout soldier and sent them to Joppa.

Alida—Verily, that was a wondrous vision. What thinkest thou the meaning thereof, and what will the man declare unto thee?

Cornelius—Surely Jehovah is mindful of our devotions and has some great blessing for us. But we must await the arrival of the apostle and let him explain to us what it means. [Sound of trumpet is heard outside.] Even now he cometh unto us.

Servant (entering)—Peace be unto you. We have returned from Joppa with Simon, also called Peter, who will minister unto thee.

Cornelius—Bid him to enter at once. [Peter enters.]

All Household (bowing)—All hail to thee, servant of God.

Peter—Peace be unto you all.

Cornelius (falling at Peter's feet)—Messenger of God, I am unworthy to receive you.

Peter—Stand up, I myself also am a man. I came without gainsaying, when I was sent for. I ask, therefore, with what intent ye sent for me?

Cornelius (rising)—Four days ago I was fasting, and at the ninth hour I prayed in my house, and behold, a man stood before me in bright clothing and said: "Cornelius, thy prayer is heard, and thine alms are had in remembrance in the sight of God. Send therefore to Joppa, and call unto thee Simon, who is surnamed Peter: he lodgeth in the house of Simon, a tanner, by the seaside." Forthwith, therefore, I sent to thee; and thou hast done well that thou art come. Now therefore we are all here present in the sight of God,

to hear all things that have been commanded thee of the Lord.

Peter—Of a truth, I perceive that God is no respecter of persons, for he hath made of one blood all the nations of the earth. Just before your servant came to me in Joppa, I was on the housetop in prayer and fasting, when God revealed many things to me in a vision, saying: "What God hath cleansed, make not thou common." Therefore in every nation he that feareth Him and worketh righteousness is accepted with Him. Ye already know the word which God sent unto the children of Israel, telling of the Messiah that should come. And that promise was fulfilled in Jesus Christ, beginning in Galilee, after the baptism which John preached. Then did God send the Holy Spirit upon Jesus, who went about doing good, and healing all that were oppressed, for God was with Him. And we are witnesses of all these things which He did, both in the land of the Jews and in Jerusalem; whom they slew and hanged on a tree. But God raised Him up from the grave on the third day and showed Him openly, not to all the people, but unto witnesses chosen before God, even to us, who did eat and drink with Him after He arose from the dead. And He commanded us to preach unto the people, and to testify that it is He which was ordained of God to be the Judge of the living and the dead. To Him bear all the prophets witness, that through His name whosoever believeth in Him shall have remission of sins.

Cornelius—Thou hast brought joy unto my soul, O holy messenger of God. I want to be a disciple of this Jesus, the Christ. [Falls upon his knees.] Oh, what must I do to be saved?

Peter—Since thou hast confessed with thy lips thy belief in Jesus, arise now and be baptized, and thereby show your willingness to follow Him. [Cornelius rises.]

Alida—My daughters and I are impressed with this wonderful story. Will Christ receive women also?

Peter—Verily, some of His most tender messages were to women. There was one whose name was Mary, who brought an alabaster-box of ointment and anointed Him. All who observed it rebuked her, but the Master said: "Let her alone, she hath done what she could." If you are willing to do what you can for Him, He will accept you.

Alida (coming forward with her daughters)—We commit ourselves unto Him.

Servant—O man of God, is there any hope for one who is only a servant in the household?

Peter—Verily, the Master Himself came to us as a servant of God, and He also declared: "He that would be greatest among you, let him be servant of all." Surely He will receive you.

Soldier—Can a soldier be a follower of Jesus also?

Peter—Thou dost know what it means to obey commands. Then, obey the Master's commands. Be a good soldier of Jesus Christ.

Cornelius—Then, the Master will receive us all?

Peter—He has given us the assurance that "whosoever will may come," and whosoever cometh unto Him, He will in nowise cast out.

Cornelius—Then, come and let us be baptized, that we may go forth to serve Him. [They exit.]

[CURTAIN.]

STORY 12

THE FIRST MARTYR

CHARACTERS.

STEPHEN—A Follower of the Nazarene.
SAUL—A Pharisee from Tarsus.
ANNAS—The High Priest.
CALEB—A Servant.
ELAH—An Egyptian Lad.
MYRA—His Blind Sister.
A TEMPLE PRIEST.
AN OLD, BLIND MAN.
WORSHIPERS IN THE TEMPLE.
MALLUCH, ZARED } False Witnesses.
MEMBERS OF THE SANHEDRIN.

SCENES OF THE STORY.

SCENE I.—In the house of Annas in Jerusalem; the plot.

SCENE II.—In front of the synagogue; the arrest.

SCENE III.—In the council-room; the trial.

SCENE IV.—Outside the city gate; the stoning.

COSTUMES.

STEPHEN—A young man of about twenty-five, with smooth features. Wears a tunic of white, reaching just below the knees. Overdrapery of bright color.

SAUL—A large man, with dark hair and beard Flowing robe of white, with overdrapery of dark red or blue.

ANNAS—An old man with short, white beard. Flowing robe of white, with overdrapery of purple trimmed with yellow. White turban.

CALEB—A young man with short, dark beard. Tunic of tan toweling, with bare legs and sandals. Girdle and turban of light green.

ELAH—A lad of about nineteen. Tunic of striped Egyptian cloth and small turban of bright color. Bare legs and sandals.

MYRA—A girl of about seventeen, with gown of bright cloth, reaching half-way between knees and ankles. Head-band of beads.

TEMPLE PRIEST—Use Annas.

BLIND MAN—Flowing robe of dark cloth. White hair and beard. Bent forward on staff.

WORSHIPERS AND MEMBERS OF SANHEDRIN—The same persons may be used in each group. They wear flowing robes of dark colors, with overdraperies of contrasting colors. Turbans. Some have white beards and some dark beards.

MALLUCH AND ZARED—Costumes similar to Caleb's.

SCENE I.—IN THE HOUSE OF ANNAS IN JERUSALEM.

(Room is richly furnished with draperies, rugs and furniture of Oriental design. Annas and Saul are seated.)

Saul (passionately)—Oh that Jehovah would rend the heavens so that Israel might see His righteousness! My heart burneth within me like a live coal. I can not sleep because of these things.

Annas—Truly, it giveth me great joy to perceive such holy aspirations in so young a man. Now I know that God was with me when I was moved to send for Saul of Tarsus. I myself am an old man and can no longer support all the rigor of the law. "Who will rise up for me against the evil-doers? Who will stand up for me against the workers of iniquity?" saith the Lord.

Saul (rising)—I will stand against the workers of iniquity. I will crush them and cast them out.

Annas—Upon thee, my son, hath the mantle of the prophet fallen, and into thy hands will I commit this work. But thou must submit thyself to my direction in the matter, for I know the ways of the people and of this city as thou dost not.

Saul—Speak! for my spirit burns within me. [Sits.]

Annas—Thou dost know that the twelve apostles appointed by the Nazarene were forbidden some three years ago to speak the name of their Master, after we had let them go with scourgings. But they have paid no heed to our commands, continuing to proclaim the name of the man Jesus about Jerusalem, till the very beggars of our streets pray to Him openly.

Saul—Many of these men have been given some mysterious power by which they seem to heal the sick, the lame and the blind. One of the boldest among them is a young man called Stephen. He hath spoken openly and freely in every synagogue, alleging that the carpenter of Galilee was the Christ foretold by the prophets, and that He hath risen from the dead and is become the firstfruits of them that sleep.

Annas (nodding)—For such as this fellow there is but one remedy, as it is written in the law: "The

mouth of them that speak lies shall be stopped." [Knocking outside.] But hold! I hear some one at the door. Enter, I pray thee, Caleb. [Caleb enters.] I would hear from thee of the mission upon which I did send thee. Hast thou found the witnesses?

Caleb (bowing)—I have the witnesses, my lord, but there was no small difficulty in persuading any man to serve. Many refused outright, threatening me with death if I should dare to molest the fellow. Therefore I fear that they will warn him of our plans and that he will escape out of our hands.

Annas—He shall not escape. Who are the witnesses?

Caleb—One fellow named Zared, a fishmonger, who for the sum of ten shekels of silver hath consented to witness. The other, Malluch, a young man of some promise, who hath frequented their synagogue much of late and can therefore speak understandingly of their teachings. To him I have promised advancement in our service if he shall please the council this day.

Annas—Thou art a faithful servant, Caleb, and shall also receive the reward which was promised to thee. Now see to it that the council chamber is prepared with all speed, lest this favorable opportunity pass by us. Dost thou know where thou canst lay hands upon the man Stephen without delay?

Caleb—He is at this moment engaged in his duties of distributing amongst the rabble of Jerusalem that which is little better than stolen from the temple treasury, because it is withheld from us unlawfully. Afterward he will harangue the people, as is his custom, and trick them with some of his apparent miracles.

Annas—In what synagogue wilt thou find him?

Caleb—I have learned that to-day they will assemble in Solomon's Porch, where the fellow Stephen will address the multitude.

Annas—Well, keep the fellow under thine eye until I shall send thee word, then fetch him with all speed, together with the witnesses. But see that no tumult is made when he is arrested.

Caleb (going)—I have devised a cunning plan to entrap him, my lord. [Exit.]

Annas (to Saul)—All is going well. Our patient and apparently fruitless toil is about to be rewarded. This will prove a glorious day with us if it shall witness a victory over unrighteousness.

[CURTAIN.]

SCENE II.—IN FRONT OF THE SYNAGOGUE.

(Steps lead to the entrance. Worshipers passing in and out. Elah and Myra enter from left.)

Elah (holding Myra's hand)—Come, sister, let us make haste. Before us is the synagogue, as we have been told. We must find him at once. [Sees priest coming from synagogue.] Yonder is a venerable man. I will enquire of him. [To priest:] Canst thou tell me, sir, where to find the man Jesus, who can heal blindness?

Priest (pushing him back)—Beggar! Get thee gone! How dost thou dare pollute mine ears with that name? [Exit right.]

Elah (staring after him, with hands on hips)—By the sacred Nile! In what have I offended? Praise be to the gods, we have no such customs in Egypt. Well, I must ask another. [Sees old, blind man approaching.] Ah, sister! here comes a poor, old man who also

seems to be blind. Perhaps he also is seeking the magician. [To old man:] Canst thou tell me, sir, if there is a magician called Jesus in the city? A man who can heal blindness?

Blind Man (sadly)—There was such a man, but He is dead—crucified some five years ago. Hadst thou not heard of it? I also came too late. [Totters off, mumbling, "Too late, too late."]

(Myra, upon hearing this, puts hands to her head, moans and sinks to the ground.)

Elah (springing forward, lifts her head, crying)—Myra! Myra! Awake! [Shakes her, then looks at his water-bottle and finds it empty.]

Stephen (entering right)—What aileth thee, lad?

Elah (looking up)—My sister, who is blind, hath been suddenly overcome by the heat and weariness of our long journey. She needeth water, but my flask is empty and I know not where to find a fountain.

Stephen (stooping to give Myra a drink from his own flask)—She is not seriously ill, my lad. See! she is reviving already.

Elah—But she is blind and we have come from Egypt, seeking for the man Jesus, who can heal such. A beggar told me He is dead. Is it true?

Stephen (radiantly)—Nay, He is not dead, but liveth for evermore at the right hand of God. [Looking toward heaven.] Thou who hast said, "Lo, I am with you always," look now upon this child who hath sought Thee for healing, after this long pilgrimage through many days, and heal her, I beseech Thee, by the hand of Thy servant, according to her great faith. [He stoops and puts his hands upon Myra's eyes.] In the name of Jesus Christ of Nazareth, receive thy sight.

Myra (blinking and glowing in her new joy, springs to her feet)—Oh, Elah, is it really thee that I see? Isn't everything wonderful? [To Stephen:] Art thou the man Jesus?

Stephen—Nay, my child, I am but His servant, Stephen.

Myra—My brother and I would know more of Him.

Stephen—Verily, my friends, we will gladly tell thee of Jesus and His love for all mankind. If thou wilt meet me here at sunset, I will take thee to the home of my friends, who will give thee lodging and refreshment. Then shall we tell unto thee the glad tidings.

Elah—We will go with thee gladly. [Exit right.]

(Caleb, who has been watching the healing from a distance, now comes forward and taps Stephen on the shoulder.)

Caleb—I have been commanded to bring thee before the council of the Sanhedrin, that thou mayest answer for thy heresies.

Stephen (bowing his head)—I will go with thee, sir. [Exit.]

[CURTAIN.]

SCENE III.—IN THE COUNCIL-ROOM.

(The walls are made of rich draperies. Members of Sanhedrin are assembled before Annas, who sits on the rostrum, with a guard on each side. In front of him stands Stephen between two soldiers. Near by are Malluch and Zared.)

Annas (to Stephen)—Thou art arraigned before this sacred assembly and senate of Israel on the charge

of blasphemously speaking against Jehovah, against this most holy temple, and against the laws of Moses and the prophets. We shall therefore hear these charges confirmed by witnesses, according to our laws, which thou hast despised. Fetch the first witness. [Zared steps forward.] Dost thou, Zared, recognize in this man Stephen the one who hath blasphemed God, the temple and the law?

Zared (bowing)—I do, most worshipful high priest of Jehovah. This is the man.

Annas—Tell us now what thou hast heard him say.

Zared—I have heard him declare that the malefactor, Jesus of Nazareth, who not long ago died the accursed death, was Jehovah made manifest in the flesh. And that His precepts and commands are more binding than the precepts of Moses.

Annas—Hast thou heard him say anything against the temple?

Zared—I have heard him say that the Nazarene will shortly return to destroy this place so that not one stone will remain upon another, and that all things which Moses commanded shall be done away. Moreover, the Nazarenes have the intent to possess the earth and to overthrow all powers and governments and all gods that have ever ruled among men, so that they may establish the man Jesus upon the throne of power.

Annas—Enough! Malluch, thou mayest stand forth. Dost thou know this prisoner?

Malluch—I do, my lord.

Annas—And what hast thou to say concerning him?

Malluch—He hath spoken blasphemously against Moses and this holy place, even as hath already been said in your hearing. He hath declared that neither

by laws of man's devising nor by temples of man's building can Jehovah be pleased.

Annas—Enough! There is no need for further testimony. Let the accused stand forth. [Stephen steps forward.] Are these things so?

Stephen—Ye stiff-necked and uncircumcised in heart and ears, ye do always resist the Holy Spirit; as your fathers did, so do ye. Which of the prophets did not your fathers persecute? And they killed them which long foretold the coming of the righteous One, of whom ye have now become the betrayers and murderers.

(There is an angry murmur among the council members and they rise in their seats as if to strike him, but drop back.)

Stephen (looking toward heaven)—Behold, I see the heavens opened and the Son of man approaching on the right hand of God.

Members of Council (rushing after him)—Away with him! Stone him! Beyond the gates; it is the law.

[CURTAIN.]

SCENE IV.—OUTSIDE THE CITY GATE.

(Members of council, including Saul, rush in with Stephen, as curtain rises. They have bags of sawdust, in imitation of stones, which they throw at him.)

Mob—Beyond the gates! It is the law!

Saul—This is the place. Here are stones in abundance. Quick, or the Nazarenes will be to the rescue!

Annas—Let the witnesses cast the first stones; it is the law.

(Zared takes off his cloak, throws it to Saul, then begins throwing stones at Stephen.)

Saul—Well thrown, Zared! Again! Here is a larger one! Now, Malluch, quickly!

(Malluch throws his coat to Saul and begins casting stones.)

Stephen (on his knees, with face uplifted)—Lord Jesus, receive my spirit. [More yells and stones from the mob.] Lord, lay not this sin to their charge. [Falls dead.]

[CURTAIN.]

STORY 13

AT THE FEET OF THE APOSTLES

CHARACTERS.

ANANIAS—A Wealthy Jew.
SAPPHIRA—His Wife.
PETER AND SEVERAL OTHER APOSTLES.

COSTUMES.

ANANIAS—Flowing robe of dark cloth, with overdrapery of contrasting color. Dark hair and beard.

SAPPHIRA—Flowing gown of light color, with beads and ribbon.

APOSTLES—Flowing robes of white, with overdraperies of dark colors. Dark hair and beards, except Peter, who has a short, white beard.

SCENE I.—A ROOM IN THE HOME OF ANANIAS.

(Ananias is seated, talking with Sapphira. The room is richly furnished with Oriental rugs, draperies, vases and furniture.)

Ananias—My wife, I like not this plan of some of the apostles that we who are followers of the crucified Nazarene should sell all of our possessions that the money may be divided equally among all. If we give a tithe of what is ours, is not that all that the law demands?

Sapphira (nodding)—It is unjust, for we also shall become beggars if we do this thing. Besides, it hath been told me that the scribes and elders intend to crush the apostles, as well as all that believe. For myself, I have no mind to be stoned.

Ananias—Let us then withdraw from them.

Sapphira—Nay, for God surely is with these men, as thou hast seen.

Ananias—They do not *demand* that we sell our lands. So, let us be prudent and reserve our possessions until we shall see what is going to befall.

Sapphira—Only this morning Joses sold his farm in the hill-country and brought all the money to the apostles' feet. They know that we also have lands and expect that we will do the same. There already are five thousand persons in the church, and very few of them own enough earth to be buried in.

Ananias—It is unjust that honest, industrious folk must give up all that they have to beggars, and then what shall we have for a time of adversity or for our old age?

Sapphira—What, indeed? But we must do something, or we shall be talked about. [Drawing closer to him, cautiously.] What if we sell the land and also freely tell of the matter, but of the price that is received we shall give a part only. The remainder we shall keep in safety until we ourselves shall have need of it.

Ananias (clapping his hands together)—Verily, thou art a prudent woman. I know a man who will give me a good price for our land.

Sapphira—Go, then, and sell, but let no one know of the amount which thou dost receive. The apostle

Peter shall suppose that we have given all, even as did Joses.

Ananias—From the price of our land and the sum that we will hide, we may buy fine raiment for ourselves.

Sapphira (nudging Ananias teasingly)—Perchance I shall buy for myself a fine necklace.

Ananias—For my part I should choose a vineyard, for we then could have abundance of wine.

Sapphira (sighing)—But neither of these things can be. We must give it to the apostles, else, when the Messiah shall come, the man Peter will say: "These people, having land, sold it, but gave no part to us." Then the Messiah will give us neither place nor power.

Ananias—Suppose he comes not?

Sapphira—Then we shall at least stand well with the apostles and the rest. To-day they are all prating about the generosity of Joses. To-morrow they shall speak of our gift. But do not let them know about the other.

Ananias (rising to go)—Thou mayest trust me for that. [Laughs.] [CURTAIN.]

SCENE II.—A ROOM WHERE APOSTLES ARE ASSEMBLED.

(It is plainly furnished, without draperies and rugs.)

Ananias (entering with bags of coin)—Ah, good friends, this verily hath been a prosperous day. I have sold my lands for the service of the Lord, and here is the price thereof.

(Apostles nod in approval and marvel at his generosity.)

Andrew—Joses truly was righteous, but this man hath brought a greater sum than he.

Peter (looking steadily at Ananias)—Ananias, why hath Satan filled thine heart to lie to the Holy Spirit, and keep back part of the price of the land? While it remained, was it not thine own? And after it was sold, was it not in thine own power? Why hast thou conceived this thing in thine heart? Thou hast not lied unto men, but unto God.

(Ananias wavers for a moment, hangs his head, seems convulsed with agony, then falls at Peter's feet, dead. Two of the apostles carry him out, while the others murmur together in amazement.)

John—Verily, the Lord hath smitten him because of his sin.

Philip—Never hath such a thing been wrought among us.

Sapphira (entering through opposite door)—Ah, good friends! Hath my husband brought to thee the gift of our possessions?

Peter—Of a truth, he hath been and gone. But pray, tell me whether ye sold the land for fifty shekels?

Sapphira—Verily, for fifty shekels.

Peter—How is it that ye have agreed together with your husband to tempt the Spirit of the Lord? Behold, the feet of them which have gone to bury thy husband shall also carry thee out.

(She falls at his feet.)

[CURTAIN.]

STORY 14

THE WRATH OF ISRAEL

CHARACTERS.

Peter, James and John.
A Paralytic.
A Blind Man.
A Lame Man.
A Woman with Sick Babe.
Group of Afflicted People.
Group of Jews.
Mary of Nazareth.
Salome—Her Friend.
Annas—The High Priest.
Saul—The Pharisee from Tarsus.
Two Guards.
An Angel.

SCENES OF THE STORY.

Scene I.—A street in Jerusalem; ministry of the apostles.

Scene II.—The palace in Jerusalem; plans for persecution.

Scene III.—A room in the temple; the hour of trial.

Scene IV.—In the prison; the power of Jehovah.

COSTUMES.

THE APOSTLES—Flowing robes of white, reaching to the ankles, with overdraperies of red, brown and dark green. Peter wears a beard that is turning gray. James wears a dark beard, and John is smooth-faced. All wear sandals.

THE AFFLICTED—Flowing robes of dark colors, with overdraperies of contrasting colors. Some of the men wear beards. There should also be women in the group. They wear flowing robes, with scarfs on heads.

THE JEWS—Costumes similar to the afflicted men. Beards.

MARY AND SALOME—Mary's dress is dark blue, with head-scarf of white falling over her shoulder. Salome's dress may be of any soft color. She also has a scarf.

WOMAN WITH BABE—Dress similar to the other women.

ANNAS—An old man with short, white beard. Flowing robe of white, with overdrapery of purple, trimmed with yellow. White turban.

SAUL—Flowing robe of white, reaching to ankles. Overdrapery of dark red. Dark hair and beard. Sandals.

GUARDS—Young men with short, dark beards. Tunics of tan or brown, edged with Roman design in purple and gold. Capes of dark brown, lined with yellow. Helmets made from old derby hats painted white, with paper, fan-shaped ornament in front. Bare legs. Sandals.

SCENE I.—A STREET IN JERUSALEM.

(Arrange in front of the temple, if possible. Peter, James and John are on the steps, healing the sick,

lame and blind which come to them. Saul stands at one side, watching angrily with a group of Jews. The afflicted keep up a low moaning, which is changed to shouts of "Glory be to God!" and "Praise His holy name!" after they are healed. There should be considerable action of a quiet nature, the people passing to and fro, bringing the afflicted for healing.)

A Paralytic (borne on a litter by four men)—Have mercy upon my affliction, good brothers.

John (placing his hand upon the paralytic's head)—My poor man, I am glad that thou hast come unto us. Hast thou heard of the power of Jesus of Nazareth to heal thee?

Paralytic—Yea, I have heard the blessed story.

John—And dost thou believe upon His holy name?

Paralytic—Yea, I believe.

John—Then, in His name I command thee to arise and walk.

Paralytic (slowly rising, then leaping about joyfully)—Glory be to God! Praise His holy name!

A Blind Man (led by a child)—Oh, good sirs, wilt thou not have compassion upon one who was born blind?

Peter—By whose power dost thou think we do these things?

Blind Man—Verily, I can not see thee, but mayhap ye be angels in the garb of men.

Peter—Nay, we are but disciples of the crucified One, Jesus of Nazareth. 'Tis by faith in His name that we have power to restore thy sight. Wilt thou believe upon His name?

Blind Man—Yea, I believe with all my heart.

Peter (placing his hands upon the man's eyes)—Then, in the name of Jesus Christ of Nazareth, receive thy sight.

Blind Man (rubbing eyes for a moment, as if dazed, then looking about joyfully)—Glory be to God, and to Jesus, His Son! How beautiful is the world. [Grabbing his child.] And thou art my daughter, whose face my eyes have never beheld until now. [Hugs and kisses her.] Glory be to God! Hallelujah! [They exit.]

A Lame Man (hobbling along on a crutch)—Oh, good brothers, wilt thou look upon my affliction and heal me?

James—Dost thou know by whose power we are able to do this?

Lame Man—Yea, I have heard thy teachings of the crucified One.

James—And dost thou believe that He loved thee enough to die for thee, and that He only can heal thee of thy affliction?

Lame Man—Verily, I do believe.

James (placing his hand upon the man's head)—Then, in the name of Jesus of Nazareth, who is the Christ, this affliction is removed from thee. Go, now, and tell of His love.

Lame Man (slowly at first, then leaping joyfully)—Praise His holy name, I can walk again! Glory be to God!

A Woman (with babe)—Good masters, my babe is sick unto death. Wilt thou restore him to me?

John (taking the child)—Dost thou believe upon Jesus, the Son of God, by whose power thy son might be healed?

Woman—Yea, I do believe the wonderful words of life.

John (kissing the child)—Then take the babe and go thy way rejoicing, for the fever has departed from him.

Woman (receiving her babe)—Oh, my beloved! [Kisses child.] We will sing praises to Jehovah forever!

Peter (addressing the multitude)—Ye men of Israel, why marvel ye at these things, or why look ye so earnestly upon us, as though by our own power or holiness we do them? The God of Abraham and of Isaac and of Jacob, yea, the God of our fathers, hath glorified His Son Jesus, whom ye delivered up and denied before Pilate. By faith in His name are these things wrought. Repent, therefore, and turn again, that your sins may be blotted out.

(Those who are healed fall at the apostles' feet, shouting for joy; but the Jews who have been watching cry: "Blasphemers!" "Sorcerers!" "Defilers of the temple!")

[CURTAIN.]

SCENE II.—THE PALACE IN JERUSALEM, SOME MONTHS LATER.

(Annas and Saul are discovered.)

Annas (pacing the floor)—I rejoice in thy presence here to-day, brother Saul, for there are important things which we must consider. Thou dost know thyself how all Jerusalem is in an uproar. Though we have accomplished the death of the Nazarene, His followers still are with us. With the trunk of the poisonous

vine we must also thoroughly burn the branches, lest they bud anew.

Saul—Thou hast the tongue of wisdom, my lord. 'Tis worse even than when the man Himself was alive. But what can we do?

Annas—What, indeed, shorn of our powers as we be? But shall we then sit quietly down and allow these men to snatch from us the little power that remains? [Picks up a parchment, which he unrolls.] Let us now consider this matter between ourselves. Later it must be presented before the council, but I tell you plainly that in the council there are them that be of two minds.

Saul—Thou knowest that my heart is with thee in the matter, my lord.

Annas—I have written here the names of them that are principally concerned in the recent disturbances.

Saul—Let them be either slain or forced into banishment, and their followers will quickly lose their fervor.

Annas (nodding)—I have prepared this list after most careful inquiry and investigation. There are only seventeen names, but others may be added from time to time. The first man is Simon, also called Peter, without question the most dangerous of them all.

Saul—Was he not the one who, on the night of His arrest, declared with curses that he never knew the Nazarene?

Annas—Thou art right, my son, though I had entirely forgotten the circumstances. Indeed, all of His followers forsook Him and fled that night. [Looking at list again.] The second name I have set down is that of John, who is always to be found with the man

Peter. He is quite as dangerous, since they both seem to have some means of deluding the people into believing that they have healing power.

Saul—There is a way provided by law for dealing with men who have familiar spirits. No mercy should be shown to them.

Annas—Quite right, my son. We shall come to that presently. Of the others I need say nothing, except that they follow the same practices as the first two named, and are occupied day and night in spreading their blasphemous teachings. Eleven of them were associated closely with the Nazarene, for thou knowest already the fate of Judas. [Saul nods.] To these names I have added the name of Mary, the mother of the Nazarene, together with several other women who follow with the men and brew mischief as only women are able.

Saul—There also is a young man called Stephen, who is a leader and who draws many people to them.

Annas—His name also is on the list, as well as the names of Nicodemus and Joseph of Arimathea, former members of the Sanhedrin, but now followers of the Nazarene. [Rising.] Now, wilt thou go search them out in their abodes and bring them hither, that they may confess all their evil doings?

Saul (rising)—Thy commands, my lord, shall be obeyed, and I rejoice that I am counted worthy to be of service in banishing these workers of iniquity.

Annas (lifting his arms in benediction)—Go forth, my son, and take with thee a high-priestly blessing. May it enable thee to rid this holy city of these blasphemers.

[CURTAIN.]

SCENE III.—A ROOM IN THE TEMPLE.

(Annas is seated in a high-backed chair behind a big, oaken table. Guards stand on each side of him. Mary, Salome, John and James are brought in, chained to two guards. Saul precedes them, advances to Annas, whispers to him a moment and gives him a slip of parchment.)

Annas (to the prisoners)—Where is the man called Peter? [There is no reply, so he continues sternly.] Can ye not speak, or hath it come to pass that thy tongues already are withered in thy mouths?

John (calmly)—If thou art questioning me, I know not where the apostle is. He went forth early this morning on some errand of mercy, leaving me in charge of the house, with these friends. We are law-abiding citizens of a law-abiding city; wherefore hath it come to pass that we are thus dragged through the streets in chains?

Annas—That thou shall shortly hear. [To Saul:] Hast thou examined these prisoners?

Saul—I examined them briefly before making the arrests, according to my custom, for I would not transgress the law in this work of purging our holy city of them that blaspheme. I found all of these prisoners obstinate and unwilling to renounce their sins, so I have brought them before thee for further examination and sentence.

Annas—This being so, the law must take its course with them. Wilt thou, Mary of Nazareth, stand forth? [She obeys.] Art thou the mother of the Man of Nazareth?

Mary—I am.

Annas—Thou didst teach Him to believe unholy and blasphemous things regarding Himself when He was a child. Therefore He always ignored the sacred law, and at last perished upon the cross, pretending to be the Messiah of Israel.

Mary (radiantly)—He *is* the Messiah of Israel. Therefore my soul doth magnify the Lord, for He hath regarded the low estate of His handmaiden. He is the Messiah of Israel, but He is also much more—He is the Prince of peace and the Saviour of the world.

Annas (shaking his fists)—Daughter of Abraham, thou hast blasphemed. Thou knowest the penalty.

Salome (stepping forward, falling upon her knees, with hands clasped)—Father, forbear this last awful sin, lest God smite thee in His wrath and consume thee to ashes!

Annas (furiously)—And who art thou, to give orders to the high priest. [Rising.] Get thee up and stand back!

Salome—I care not for myself, for death is welcome. But take heed to thyself, I beseech thee, before thou dost raise thy hand against this good woman.

Annas (contemptuously)—Have we not crucified the carpenter and are unharmed? Is the mother more exalted? Nay, we shall deal with her after the law.

James (stepping forward)—Prate not of the law, thou who art a murderer! The man Jesus was guiltless and ye did condemn Him. Guiltless also are these women. Release them, but do with me as thou wilt, for the servant is no greater than his lord.

Saul—Thinkest thou so? But take heed to what I shall say. The Sanhedrin is full of mercy and offers pardon freely to all who confess and forsake the error

of their ways. So, if ye all will acknowledge that the Nazarene was an imposter, ye will immediately be released without further punishment. [To Mary:] Wilt thou so confess and secure thy freedom?

Mary—Never, for I already have counted the cost, and the reward is exceedingly glorious above all that the heart of man can imagine.

Saul—Thou art condemned. [To Salome:] Woman, wilt thou renounce these vile errors and secure the blessing of the Almighty?

Salome (shaking her head)—Nay, for I believe on the Lord Jesus Christ as the Messiah of Israel, and no offers of freedom can change my heart.

Saul—Thou, too, art condemned. [To John:] Young man, wilt thou confess to the charges which have been made against thee?

John (firmly)—Nay, for I, too, believe that Jesus was the Christ, and was put to death upon the cross that He might draw all men unto Him.

Saul—Thou also art condemned. [To James:] And hast thou, sir, counted the cost of thine actions?

James—I can not deny Him on whom I have believed, and I am willing to die for my belief if death be the penalty for believing.

Saul—Thou art all condemned. [To Annas:] Thou seest what pestilent apostates these are. There is no need to argue further. Therefore, let them be publicly scourged outside the gates. Perhaps they will then confess that the Nazarene and all His works are of the devil.

Annas (rising)—Forty stripes save one shall be laid upon each of you to-morrow at about this hour, according to the law of Moses, who thus appointed it

for the peace of Israel. Afterward, if ye will not confess, ye shall die the appointed death.

Salome (grabbing his robe)—Mercy! have mercy! We can not but believe the things which we have seen and heard. Nay, thou wouldst thyself believe if the Lord should reveal Himself to thee.

Annas (pushing her back)—Unhand me, woman! Satan hath blinded thee to the truth. [To guards:] Take these blasphemers into the inner prison and remember that thou answerest for them with thine own lives. [They exit.] [CURTAIN.]

Scene IV.—In the Prison.

(Mary, Salome, James and John are sitting on piles of straw. The place is lighted by two lanterns which hang from the ceiling. At rise of curtain they sing together, "The Lord Is My Shepherd.")

Salome (at conclusion of song)—Dost thou think that He will deliver us?

Mary (putting arms around her)—He will deliver us, beloved, in His own best way. If the way lie through the dark valley, then will the end thereof be only the more glorious.

Salome—But the scourging, the shame, how—how shall we endure it?

Mary—He also endured, being divine; and shall we, who are but mortal, shrink back? Think not of the morrow, save that we shall stand before Him in clothing of immortality.

Salome—But if we fail, if we should deny Him? I know not my own heart, whether I can endure unto the end.

Mary—He will give thee grace when the need comes. Wouldst thou at this moment deny Him?

Salome—No! Ah, no!

Mary—Neither wilt thou deny Him on the morrow. He giveth us strength in due season, and to-morrow is in His hand.

(There is a great noise as of an earthquake, and an angel appears at right entrance. The four prisoners stand quickly.)

Angel—Come forth, my servants, and give proof again of the saving power of Jehovah, in the name of Jesus, His Son. [Vanishes.]

[SLOW CURTAIN.]

STORY 15

A STRICKEN TRAVELER

CHARACTERS.

Saul—A Pharisee from Tarsus.
Annas—The High Priest.
Two Guards.
Angel of the Lord.
Ananias—A Devout Jew of Damascus.
Myra—His Wife.
Judas—A Wealthy Citizen of Damascus.
Malluch—His Servant.
Several Men and Women.

SCENES OF THE STORY.

Scene I.—In the house of Annas in Jerusalem; Saul the persecutor.

Scene II.—On the road to Damascus; the vision at noonday.

Scene III.—On the housetop of Ananias; called for service.

Scene IV.—In the house of Judas; Saul's conversion.

Scene V.—In the house of Ananias; the midnight escape.

COSTUMES.

SAUL—A man with dark hair and beard. Flowing robe of white, with overdrapery of dark red, edged with dark blue. Turban of blue and white.

ANNAS—An elderly man, with short, white beard and white hair. Robe of white, with cloak of purple, edged with yellow. High, white turban.

GUARDS—Young men with short, dark beards. Tunics of tan or brown, edged with Roman design in purple and gold. Capes of dark brown, lined with yellow. Helmets made from old derby hats painted white, each with paper, fan-shaped ornament in front. Bare legs. Sandals.

ANGEL—Usual flowing robe of white, with wings.

ANANIAS AND JUDAS—Men of middle age, with dark hair and beards. Flowing robes of brilliant colors, with overdraperies of contrasting colors. Ananias wears a white turban or hood in Scene IV.

MALLUCH—A young man. Tunic of tan or brown, girded at the waist and made with short sleeves. Bare legs. Sandals. Small turban of light green.

MYRA—Woman of middle age, with flowing robe of delicate color, and beads for Scene I. Dark robe for Scene V.

MEN AND WOMEN—Flowing robes of dark colors.

SCENE I.—A ROOM IN THE HOUSE OF ANNAS IN JERUSALEM.

(It is richly furnished with draperies and furniture of Oriental design. Annas and Saul are seated.)

Annas—I have summoned thee hither this morning, my son, that we might consider the vile things that

have transpired of late within the walls of our holy city. Thou dost know how that all of Jerusalem is in an uproar. The credulous and ignorant from all the country round about are coming hither, bringing their sick with them.

Saul—Yea, 'tis worse even than when the Nazarene Himself was alive, for He was but one man, and now there are a score of them who seem to have some mysterious power by which they heal the sick, the lame and the blind. But what can we do?

Annas—What, indeed, shorn of our powers as we be? But shall we sit quietly down and allow these men to snatch from us the little power that remains?

Saul (passionately)—Nay! we must crush them and cast them out! My heart is with thee in this matter, my lord.

Annas—Truly, it giveth me great joy to perceive such holy aspirations in so young a man. Now I know that God was with me when I was moved to seek thy help in this matter. Verily, thou didst win the hearty approval of the Sanhedrin in the assistance which thou didst give us in ridding the city of the fellow Stephen. But after his death some of the Nazarene's disciples fled from the city. Perhaps they will seek refuge in Damascus, where, I am told, many of the accursed apostates are now dwelling in fancied security. Let no place be secure for them.

Saul—Thy house has friendly relations with the ruler of Damascus. Give me letters, therefore, that I may carry fire and sword into the camp of Jehovah's enemies. I will fetch them chained unto Jerusalem, that they may perish in sight of the walls which they have dishonored.

Annas—Thou hast spoken wisely, my son. I will write the letters for thee at once, that thou mayest start without delay. [Rises.] And in this holy city we also shall continue the good work which we have begun. This disgraceful heresy, which is even as a spot of foul leprosy on the fair body of Israel, shall be utterly purged away.

Saul (who also has risen)—A spot of leprosy indeed. It hath crept into the very life-blood of the nation. Neither threatenings, scourgings nor torture hath power to move these Nazarenes. I will therefore pursue them even unto strange cities. Within this hour shall I set forth. [Both exit.]

[CURTAIN.]

SCENE II.—ON THE ROAD TO DAMASCUS.

(It is a desert scene, with group of tall palms at left. Plain yellow or blue back curtain, if painted scenery is not available. Saul and two guards enter from right.)

A Guard—My lord, let us rest here until the heat of the day be past, then in the evening hours we shall press on to the next village, where we may spend the night and continue on to Damascus early after sunrise.

Saul (shaking head)—Nay, we will not tarry, for we are not going to Damascus as those who travel for pleasure. We seek the blood of them that confess the accursed Jesus.

(The sky is suddenly flooded with a bright light and Saul falls to the ground. Guards stand in astonished silence.)

Angel (appearing at right)—Saul, Saul, why persecutest thou me? It is hard for thee to kick against the goad.

Saul—Who art thou, Lord?

Angel—I am Jesus, whom thou persecutest.

Saul (sitting with arms outstretched)—Lord, what wilt thou have me to do?

Angel—Arise, go into the city, and it shall be told thee what thou must do. [Vanishes.]

(Saul rises slowly, but seems dazed.)

Saul (putting hands to his eyes)—Lo, I am blind!

A Guard (taking him by the arm)—Come, we will lead thee. [Exit.]

[CURTAIN.]

SCENE III.—ON THE HOUSETOP OF ANANIAS, OVERLOOKING DAMASCUS.

(The back drop may be a view of city roofs or a plain, blue curtain. A parapet made of building-paper, marked to resemble stones, should be arranged across the back and two sides of the platform. It should be about two feet high, and just beyond it should be seen the tops of palm-trees. The floor is covered with rugs and there are several benches. Urns of flowers also may be used. An electric fan off stage gives suggestion of a breeze. The only light comes from above, to resemble moonlight. Steps at right lead down to court-yard. At rise of curtain Myra is seated, crooning to a baby in her arms. Allow time for this. Presently she observes Ananias ascending the stairs, and rises to greet him. They embrace.)

Ananias—Greetings to thee, my beloved.

Myra—Welcome home, my husband. I did not expect thee so soon. [They sit.]

Ananias—Our mission was finished, so we tarried no longer, but with fear in our hearts we returned to our loved ones.

Myra (anxiously)—How didst thou find our friends in Jerusalem?

Ananias—There are tidings of evil.

Myra—Pray, what hath befallen?

Ananias—There hath been in Jerusalem a great persecution of them that believe on the crucified One. Many are slain, others are in prison, and others are fled.

Myra—Who hath caused these things to be done?

Ananias (bitterly)—They that slew Jesus of Nazareth, and who will yet accomplish the destruction of all who believe on Him.

Myra—Hast thou forgotten that the Christ is set down at the right hand of Jehovah? Surely He will not suffer thy foot to be moved.

Ananias—He already hath suffered Stephen to be stoned. [Myra clasps her hands in anguish.] He hath suffered other disciples to be scourged and imprisoned. He hath suffered babes also to be left desolate and little children to cry for food. [Myra holds the babe closer to her breast.] But the destroyers are not moved.

Myra—Yet the Lord is mindful of His own. Aye, beloved, we are at peace here in Damascus. Let us send word to the smitten ones that they come hither, for here they shall find refuge.

Ananias—Verily, I learned that many already have come hither. But I have not yet told thee the worst. A certain Saul of Tarsus, a Pharisee taught of Gama-

liel, and most bitter against the Christ, hath come hither to Damascus, intending to carry away in chains to Jerusalem every disciple of the crucified One. He is without mercy and will slay all who resist him. When I heard of this I made haste to return to Damascus to warn the brethren.

Myra—Surely it were better to flee into the desert than to perish under the scourge.

Ananias—Yet I heard a strange thing as I came hither to-night. It was told me by one of the keepers of the eastern gate. Yesterday, at about the ninth hour, a company of men approached the city, among them being one who was led by two others. When questioned as to where they were from, one of the men replied: "The chief man of our company here is Saul, a worshipful rabbi of Jerusalem. He hath been grievously smitten and blinded by a great light which blazed out of heaven as we journeyed. He beareth letters from the senate and council of Israel to the governor of this city. Grant us a speedy entrance, that we may lead him to a resting-place." So they were granted admission and he is now among us. God grant that death may overtake him speedily.

Myra—Thou knowest not what thou art saying, beloved. God's ways are not the ways of man in all things. This is some mystery which we do not understand. Vengeance belongeth only to the Lord. [Rising.] But come, my husband, let us sup, for the hour grows late.

Ananias—Nay, go thou and eat, beloved. I shall fast to-night for the peace of the brethren.

Myra—And what will it profit them, my lord, if thou dost fast?

Ananias—It is not alone for them, but for ourselves, that I may faint not in the hour of trial.

Myra (embracing him, and, taking her child, goes down the stairs)—Then, I shall leave thee to thy meditations, and may peace come to thy heart.

(Ananias walks to and fro for a moment, while orchestra plays softly, "My Faith Looks Up to Thee;" then he kneels in prayer as music continues. Presently a bright light bursts from off stage, shining full upon him, and an angel appears, calling, "Ananias!")

Ananias (turning)—Behold, I am here, Lord.

Angel—Arise; go into the street called Straight, and ask in the house of Judas for one called Saul of Tarsus. For, behold, he prayeth, and hath seen in a vision a man named Ananias coming in, and putting his hand on him, that he may receive his sight.

Ananias (standing)—Yea, Lord, I have heard of this man, how much evil he hath done to thy saints in Jerusalem, and how he hath authority from the chief priests to bind all who call on Thy name.

Angel—Go thy way, for he is my chosen herald, to proclaim my name before the Gentiles and kings and the children of Israel. And I will show him how great things he must suffer for my name's sake. [Vanishes.]

[CURTAIN.]

SCENE IV.—ROOM IN THE HOUSE OF JUDAS IN DAMASCUS.

(Use same setting as Scene I., with rearrangement of furniture. A small potted palm and urns of flowers also may be used. Judas and the two temple officers are discovered, the former being seated.)

Judas—'Tis a strange case. If the man does not speedily recover his wits, we must report the matter.

Guard—Thinkest thou that he will recover?

Judas (shrugging shoulders)—Nay, how can I tell? There was a light, sayest thou? Lightning, perchance? And yet how could that be out of a clear sky?

Guard—There was a light. I saw it myself, as did my companion here with me. [Companion nods.] There also was the sound of a voice.

Judas—If there had been a cloud in the heavens, we could perchance say the sound was thunder. That would explain it.

Guard (firmly)—There was no cloud, I tell thee. The sky was as clear as it ever hath been in the world.

Judas—What was it, then? Methinks thou hast an opinion.

Guard (looking squarely at Judas)—I think the man beheld the crucified Nazarene and was rebuked of Him.

Judas (scornfully)—Oh, ho! art thou also become an apostate, who wert chosen by the holy Sanhedrin for this sacred mission?

Guard (boldly)—If it be heresy to believe one's senses, then I am an apostate. Saul answered the voice twice. First, he cried, "Who art thou, Lord?" and afterward, "What wilt thou have me to do?"

Judas—The man was crazed by the heat. He was foolish to travel at midday in this clime. And pray, what wilt thou report to the Sanhedrin?

Guard—For the present I shall not return to the Sanhedrin.

Judas—If the man be mad, or if an unclean spirit hath taken possession of him, he must go forth into the

desert, where he may recover himself, if it be the will of Jehovah.

Guard—Thou wouldst not thrust him forth, blind and helpless as he is?

Judas—If Jehovah hath smitten him, or if the evil one hath possessed him, it signifieth but one and the same thing, according to the law. He hath gravely sinned and it ill becometh man to strive against unseen powers. [Enter Malluch.] What wouldst thou, Malluch?

Malluch (bowing low)—I kiss thy feet, most worshipful master; Ananias, a Jew, waiteth without. He would see Saul of Tarsus.

Judas—Admit him at once. [Malluch departs and returns immediately with Ananias.] Greetings, friend Ananias. [They bow. Malluch remains.]

Ananias—My errand is with one Saul of Tarsus, who is abiding under this roof. I pray that thou wilt conduct me to his presence.

Judas—Thou hast not heard, then, that the worshipful rabbi met with a lamentable disaster on his journey hither. He hath remained blind for three days, neither eating nor drinking, but praying continually. I know not what to think, but I am the more grieved concerning the matter, since the man hath come hither on a most godly errand—that of purging the synagogues of Damascus of them that blaspheme and declare a certain Galilean named Jesus, lately crucified in Jerusalem because of His crimes, to be the Christ foretold of the prophets.

Ananias (sternly)—Beware, lest thou also ignorantly fall into the grievous sin of blasphemy. Because thou hast not known the Christ, perchance thou wilt be

forgiven. But I have both seen Him and know Him, and I declare unto you that Jesus of Nazareth is the Christ of God, the Saviour of Israel. It was He whom the chief priests and elders at Jerusalem put to death, but, thanks be to Jehovah, He hath overcome the grave and is set down at the right hand of God. It was this same Jesus that appeared unto the man Saul as he journeyed to Damascus to bring death to them that believe within our city. And, behold, I am sent unto him to deliver him from his blindness, and to declare unto him the Word of peace.

Judas—It is sad indeed to see a righteous man the victim of such a delusion. If there be many such here in Damascus, the wisdom of the Sanhedrin is abundantly proven. [To Malluch:] Bring the man into our presence. [To Ananias:] I have declared to you that he hath been blind for three days.

Ananias—So did Christ remain three days in the tomb, and on the third day He arose into the newness of life.

Judas (as Saul enters with Malluch)—Here he is.

Saul—Into whose presence do I come?

Ananias (advancing toward him)—Thou art come to Ananias, who will prove thy friend, brother Saul. [Places hands on Saul's eyes.] The Lord, even Jesus that appeared unto thee by the way, hath sent me, that thou mightst receive thy sight and be filled with the Holy Spirit.

Saul (raising hands to his eyes)—Thank God, I see!

Ananias—The God of our fathers hath chosen thee, that thou shouldst know His will and hear His voice. For thou shalt be His witness to all men of what thou

hast seen and heard. And now, why tarriest thou? Arise, and be baptized, and wash away thy sins, calling on the name of the Lord. [Saul stands.] Come, I pray thee, remain at my house for awhile, and the brethren shall strengthen thine heart. [They depart.]

[CURTAIN.]

SCENE V.—A ROOM IN THE HOME OF ANANIAS.

(Furnished similarly to that of Judas'. Ananias, Myra and company of men and women are seated, with Saul also seated in their midst.)

Ananias—I fear that we do evil in the sight of God by remaining within the walls of this place. It is not enough that we keep ourselves a separate people. We ought to come out from among them, as it is commanded. The chosen and the accursed should not mingle together.

Myra—But if, by so doing, some be turned unto life eternal, surely thou wilt rejoice. It may be that God hath placed Israel as leaven among the nations, till all shall be leavened with the righteousness which it hath pleased Him to reveal to us, His chosen.

Ananias (to Saul)—For many months now, brother Saul, thou hast dwelt in Damascus, preaching Jesus of Nazareth in every synagogue, convincing men that He is indeed the Christ. But in so doing thou hast raised up fierce enemies among the Jews.

Saul (nodding)—Verily, I am aware of all this. But I also must suffer the things which I laid upon others in times past. If I be persecuted, scourged or even stoned, as I preach the Christ, I shall count it but glory, since, if I bear all with patience, I shall

not only receive reward hereafter, but now also. [Loud knocking is heard.]

Ananias (opening the door cautiously)—Enter!

Malluch (entering breathlessly)—There hath a plot been made to put Saul to death, and there are men posted at the city gates who will watch night and day that he escape not.

Saul—And how is it that thou knowest of these things?

Malluch (coming nearer)—I am of the household of Judas, and I stood outside the door as my master talked with other Jews.

Saul—Nevertheless, I shall live, and not die, for I have not yet accomplished that whereunto I am set apart.

Ananias—However, we must provide for thy safety, my brother. It is not good for thee to remain longer in Damascus.

Myra—Could he not escape by way of the walls, even if the gates be guarded? The night is dark, and Silas, thy kinsman, dwells in a house whose windows overhang the walls.

Ananias—But how?

Myra (displaying a large rope basket)—In this, perhaps. It is strong, and, if there be no other way, we can at least attempt it.

Saul—Verily, it is a good plan. [Rises.] Let us hasten. [All exit.]

[CURTAIN.]

STORY 16

AN INTERRUPTED CORONATION

CHARACTERS.

PAUL—A Herald of the Cross.
BARNABAS—His Companion.
ELIPHAZ—A Jew from Antioch.
TIMOTHY—A Young Christian.
EUNICE—Timothy's Mother.
LOIS—Timothy's Grandmother.
JOSES—A Cripple.
A PRIEST OF JUPITER.
MEN, WOMEN AND CHILDREN OF LYSTRA.

SCENES OF THE STORY.

SCENE I.—The market-place at Lystra; an interrupted coronation.

SCENE II.—In the home of Eunice, next morning; Timothy is called.

COSTUMES.

PAUL—A man past middle age, with graying hair and beard. Flowing robe of white, with overdrapery of blue, edged with red.

BARNABAS—A man of middle age, with dark hair and beard. Flowing robe of white, with overdrapery of dark green and brown.

Priest of Jupiter—An old man with white hair and beard. White gown, with flowing sleeves, and girdle of bright cloth. Hood of peculiar design, of same color as girdle.

Timothy—A lad of about seventeen. Tunic of white or tan toweling, with girdle of bright cloth. Bare legs. Sandals.

Joses—A young man with dark hair. Tunic of brown, with scarf of mixed colors. Bare legs. Sandals. Staff.

Eunice and Lois—Flowing robes of bright colors, with head-scarfs of contrasting colors. Lois has gray hair.

Eliphaz—Flowing robe of dark color, with over-drapery of contrasting color. Dark hair and beard.

Villagers—The men wear tunics of various colors. Bare arms and legs. Girdles and turbans of bright colors. Women wear gowns of bright colors, similar to that of Eunice. Children wear tunics.

Scene I.—The Market-place at Lystra.

(Several booths, covered with awnings at back, where merchants are displaying their wares, such as fruits, pottery, rugs and silks. Sticks and stones are scattered about, the latter being small bags filled with sawdust. An electric fan off stage gives suggestion of a breeze. Palm-trees may be used on either side of platform, or large branches of your native trees, if play is given in growing season. Joses lies on a pallet at back center, between two of the booths. Paul and Barnabas at left. Group of villagers at right, among them Lois, Eunice and Timothy.)

Barnabas (to Paul)—My heart is burdened with the needs of the people, good brother. There are many here who need healing in body as well as soul. I have observed the poor fellow there [points to Joses] for the past three days as we have stood here preaching. And to-day his face was radiant. I think he hath faith to be healed. Wilt thou not speak to him concerning his faith in the Lord Jesus?

Paul (nodding)—I, too, have seen the pleading in his eyes. [Turning to Joses.] My brother, didst thou not hear us as we proclaimed the story of Jesus and His love?

Joses—Verily, teacher, it is a beautiful story, but can it be for such a poor cripple as I?

Paul—Dost thou believe on the Lord Jesus as thy Saviour?

Joses—With all my heart.

Paul—Then, stand upon thy feet!

(Joses arises slowly, then jumps around to make sure he is not dreaming, and shouts: "Praise be to Jehovah! Blessed be the name of the Lord!" Paul and Barnabas draw him aside and talk with him in pantomime. The villagers have observed the healing with wonderment.)

A Villager—A wondrous miracle! Behold, the gods are come down to us in the likeness of men!

Second Villager—Behold, the venerable healer [points to Saul], his flowing beard, his shining countenance! Lo, our guardian Mercury hath visited his people in human form!

Villagers—O wondrous day! O blessed day!

A Villager (pointing to Barnabas)—And the younger man, with his fiery eyes, his eloquent tongue and his

dignified figure! Who may this be but the messenger Jupiter?

Priest of Jupiter—Let us do them honor straightway, lest they be offended and smite us in their wrath.

(Villagers step off platform, right and left, as if to pluck branches of trees and flowers growing near by, and, returning, burst into a sort of chant. Paul and Barnabas turn to observe them. They make wreaths with the flowers.)

Priest (approaching Paul and Barnabas)—Hearest thou our songs of rejoicing, gracious divinity? [Bows low.] O heaven-born strangers, we have come with sacrifices and honor. [Villagers put the flowers upon them and palms at their feet.]

Paul (bewildered)—Surely thou dost mistake, good friends. [To priest:] Pray, tell us what thy people think us to be.

Priest (kneeling)—Do not be angry with me, O Mercury, and thou [to Barnabas], O Jupiter, if the people have discovered thy divinity.

Paul (amazed)—Mercury? [Then seeming to understand.] Oh, foolish man, what hath bewitched thee? [To Barnabas:] They think us to be the gods.

(Villagers bow to the ground, shouting: "Behold the gods!")

Paul (lifting them up)—Men! Women! Why do ye this thing?

Priest (to villagers)—They are not minded to reveal their divinity, my children. Nevertheless, it is fitting that we do them sacrifice.

Paul—Nay, nay! I declare to you that we are only men like yourselves. We proclaim that ye should turn from these vanities unto the living God, who made

heaven and earth and sea and all things that are therein. In bygone times He permitted all the heathen to go their own ways. Yet He hath not omitted to give you, in His kindly acts, evidence about Himself, sending you, as He does, rain from heaven, and harvest, and satisfying your desires with food and good cheer. But thine ears are deaf to His ministry. Now, continue in thine own follies. [Departs with Barnabas and Joses.]

Eliphaz (who has been watching the scene, comes forward)—Alas! good friends, the deceivers who have wrought ruin in Iconium and Antioch have come hither also. Know ye, unhappy Lystrians, that these men are foul blasphemers, children of the wicked one, who will assuredly lead you away into eternal death.

Villagers (shouting)—Blasphemers! Sorcerers! Murderers!

Eliphaz (waving arms)—If ye would save yourselves from the wrath of the great God, slay these men and cast them from your village. So perish all enemies of the law!

(Villagers pick up stones and sticks, rushing after the teachers, crying as above. Timothy, Eunice and Lois have drawn apart during the discussion, but now in agony follow the mob.)

[CURTAIN.]

Scene II.—In the Home of Eunice, Near Lystra, Early Next Morning.

(It is furnished simply, with a table and benches covered with Oriental draperies. Paul, torn and bleed-

ing, lies on cot in center of room. Barnabas, Joses, Timothy, Eunice and Lois surround him.)

Joses (wailing)—It can not be that he is dead! It can not—can not be!

Timothy—All through the night he has lain there without speaking to us.

Lois—Little wonder that the poor villagers, in their idolatry, thought him to be a god.

Eunice (entering with a pan of water)—Let me try this fresh water. [Kneels and bathes his face.] It may be that he was only stunned. Ah, see! I am sure that he stirred. [They watch Paul eagerly.] Verily, verily, he is reviving.

Paul (slowly recovering and sitting up)—What meaneth this place and thy loving care?

Barnabas (with arms around Paul)—Dost thou not remember that the Lystrians tried to kill thee? Thou art in the home of Eunice, who believes in Jesus. Here also is her mother Lois, and her son Timothy. They are true friends in this hour of need. You are in safe hands. [Paul nods.]

Joses (kneeling)—And I am the cripple whom thou didst heal and lead to know the Christ. It was because of thy teaching that the Lystrians tried to kill thee.

Paul—It is a faithful saying: "If we died with him, we shall also live with him. If we endure, we shall also reign with him."

Timothy—For three days we have heard thee and the good Barnabas preaching in the market-place, declaring that Jesus, the lowly Nazarene, is the Son of God.

Paul—And dost thou believe it, my son?

Timothy (falling on his knees)—I do believe with all my heart.

Paul (putting hands upon Timothy's head)—Then, lay fast hold upon eternal life, whereunto thou art also called, and may the Lord keep and bless thee in all thy ways from this time forth and even for evermore.

Eunice—It hath always been my hope that some day he might be a servant of Jehovah.

Paul (eagerly)—Wilt thou give this, thy son, to the ministry of the Lord?

Eunice—If the Lord hath called him, why should I withhold him?

Paul—I am sure that the Lord will ordain him for a blessed service. When I come again perhaps I shall take him with me. But now [rising], Barnabas, we must be on our way, for the day is at hand, and it must find us many miles from this place.

Lois (placing her hands on his arm)—But thou art not able to travel, good teacher. Surely thou wilt tarry with us until thou art recovered from thy wounds.

Paul (girding himself and putting on sandals)—I can do all things through Christ who strengtheneth me. [Raises arms.] May the love of God and the fellowship of Jesus Christ abide with you all. [Starts to go.] We shall be with you again before many days, for, if God wills, we shall return to all the cities wherein we have preached, that we may comfort and confirm them which have believed. [Limps off with Barnabas. The others stand, watching them.]

Eunice—Alas! he will die by the wayside.

Timothy (clasping his hands)—I truly love that man. I shall always love him.

[CURTAIN.]

STORY 17

A HERALD OF THE CROSS

CHARACTERS.

PAUL—A Herald of the Cross.
SILAS, TIMOTHY, LUKE } Paul's Companions.
ADINA—An Insane Fortune-teller.
HORUS AND JOCCA—Adina's Masters.
CITIZENS OF PHILIPPI.
LYDIA—A Seller of Purple.
SEVERAL WOMEN—Her Servants.
THE CITY JUDGE.
THE JAILOR.
A GUARD.
SEVERAL PRISONERS.

SCENES OF THE STORY.

SCENE I.—A street in Philippi; the missionaries arrive.

SCENE II.—A prayer-house by the riverside; Lydia is converted.

SCENE III.—A street in Philippi; a demon cast out.

SCENE IV.—In the market-place; before the magistrate.

SCENE V.—In the prison at Philippi; deliverance.

SCENE VI.—The same, next morning; the magistrates are rebuked.

SCENE VII.—The same, an hour later; release.

SCENE VIII.—In the home of Lydia; reunion.

COSTUMES.

PAUL—Flowing robe of white, with overdrapery of dark blue, edged with red. Hair and beard slightly gray.

SILAS AND LUKE—Men of middle age, with dark hair and beards. Costumes similar to Paul's, but of different colors.

TIMOTHY—A younger man, without beard. Robe shorter than Paul's.

ADINA—This is an imaginary name given to her. She is a young girl, with long, dark hair, bound around the forehead with bright ribbon. Dress of bright red, with beads. Bare legs and sandals.

HORUS AND JOCCA—Rough-looking men, with dark hair and beards. Flowing robes of dark colors. Turbans. They have whips or lashes.

LYDIA—Flowing robe of purple, with head-scarf of white.

HER SERVANTS—Flowing robes of various colors, with scarfs.

CITIZENS—The men wear tunics and robes of various colors, with bare legs and sandals. Girdles and turbans of bright colors. The women's dress is similar to that of Lydia, with various colors.

THE JUDGE—Robe of rich purple, trimmed with red. Turban.

JAILOR AND GUARD—Tunics of tan cloth. Cape of purple hangs from shoulders. Helmets made of old

derby hats painted white. Brown socks, with sandals laced high. Dark hair and beards. Spears.

Scene I.—A Street in Philippi.

(Arranged in front of a drop curtain, which is hung in front of Scene II., the latter being set behind it. Adina sits cross-legged on a pallet, and on either side stand Horus and Jocca. Group of citizens pass to and fro.)

Horus (calling)—Come hither, men and women, worshipful lords and beautiful ladies. Learn of the future from the lips of the divine prophetess.

Adina (seeing Paul, Silas, Timothy and Luke in the crowd)—Ho! servants of the most high God, which show us the way of salvation!

(The four missionaries stop for a moment and regard her with pity, then pass on their way. People continue passing.)

[curtain.]

Scene II.—A Prayer-house on the Riverside Just Outside the Gates of Philippi.

(It is a sort of rough-latticed portico, with overhanging eaves, built against the city wall. Lydia and several other women are bowed in prayer, their heads covered with veils.)

Paul (entering with his friends)—Verily, I did tell thee that, if there be any in this city who worship God, we would find them by the riverside.

Silas—It is even as thou hast said, good brother. Shall we not speak to them? [Women lift their heads and the men bow.]

Paul (seating himself with the others)—My good women, wilt thou pause in thy worship to hear thy brother Paul, a humble servant of the most high God? [Women nod and give him eager attention.] I have come hither with my good brother Silas [points]; Luke, a beloved physician from Antioch [points], and the young man Timothy [points], after a long journey, proclaiming the gospel of Jesus, the lowly Nazarene whom God ordained to be His Son. And this same Jesus hath been rejected by the Jews as their promised Messiah, and was crucified of them, that in His death He might bear our sins. For the wages of sin is death, but the gift of God is eternal life through Christ the Lord. Him declare I unto you as the Saviour of the world. Wilt thou believe that this is true?

Lydia (clasping her hands, with face upturned)—O Lord, I will exalt Thee and praise Thy name, for Thou hast done wonderful things!

Silas—Dost thou believe the words of the apostle Paul?

Lydia—Verily, I believe with great joy the words which he hath spoken, for my heart beareth me witness that they are true words.

Paul—Wilt thou tell us of thyself, good woman?

Lydia (nodding)—I was born in the city of Thyatira, but the years have brought me hither, where I have established me a house for the making of the precious dye-stuffs of purple and crimson. Many years ago I did forsake the gods of my fathers, for I was persuaded that the Jehovah of the Jews was the only true God. Yet have I found the laws of their religion a grievous burden, since it seemeth not possible to observe them all perfectly.

Paul—And art thou willing to come now and be baptized in the name of the Lord Jesus?

Lydia (as they all rise)—Not only I, but my whole household, for I have many handmaids and slaves, some who are here with me now, who also labor for me. These have I instructed in the fear of Jehovah, so that they worship no other god. If the Lord Jesus will receive me, surely He will receive them.

Paul—Surely thou dost have wonderful love for thy servants, and the Lord will bless them as thou hast said.

Lydia—Where dost thou abide, and where is the abode of thy friends in the city?

Paul—We have but just arrived in Philippi, after a long journey through country and cities, where we have endeavored to preach Christ, so we have not yet found lodgings here.

Lydia—If ye have judged me to be faithful to the Lord, come all of you into my house and abide there.

Paul—We will go with thee gladly. [Exit all.]

[CURTAIN.]

SCENE III.—SAME AS SCENE I.

(Citizens pass along.)

Horus (snapping whip)—Ah, thou young she-devil! Dost thou know thy master?

Adina (cowering)—Yes, yes, master. Do not beat me! I will obey. I see many, many things—wheels that turn and turn, waters that roar, and fire that burns. [Waves hands before her face as she speaks.]

Horus—Ah! 'tis well, and mind that you speak up loudly to-day.

Adina—Yes, yes, my calling shall be loud, good sir. Fortuna should favor us richly to-day. [Sees the missionaries approaching.] Oh, servants of the most high God, which show us the way of salvation!

(The missionaries stop and regard her pityingly, while citizens continue to pass.)

Jocca—Worshipful lords and beautiful ladies, come one, come all, and learn the future from the lips of the divine prophetess Adina! More wonderful than the oracle at Delphi, the heaven-inspired Adina! Her prophecies are the marvel of the age.

Adina—Ho! servants of the most high God, which show us the way of salvation!

Horus—Hast thou lost anything? Adina can reveal its hiding-place. Art thou in doubt about to-morrow's ventures? Adina can counsel thee. Art thou ill? Adina can cure thee.

Adina (wildly)—Ho! servants of the most high God, which show us the way of salvation!

Silas (to his three friends)—'Tis a sad case. For three days now she hath called after us in this fashion.

Luke—Can we not do something to help her?

Timothy—Good Paulos, what dost thou think of this poor creature? Should we not speak to her?

Paul (nodding)—Verily, she is possessed of an evil spirit. [Turning to Adina and snapping his fingers.] I command thee in the name of Jesus Christ to come out of her!

(Adina slowly recovers from her insanity. The wild expression vanishes and her hands drop into her lap.)

Jocca—What ails thee, witch? Do not fear the prating Jew.

Adina (bewildered)—How came I here? [Starts to rise.] I must go home now.

A Citizen—Ha! ha! The Jew is a magician. He has spoiled your property, good masters! The girl will be worth nothing in your business now!

Horus (shrieking)—You lie! I will beat the witch until the spirit returns! [Pushes Adina to the ground and raises whip.]

Citizen—Better take thy vengeance out of the hide of yonder accursed Jew. [Paul and Silas realize their peril and flee, but Luke and Timothy remain.]

Horus (lowering whip)—Thou hast spoken well! We will seize the mischief-makers and let them taste of Roman law! [He and Jocca rush after Paul and Silas, with citizens following, crying:] Away with them! Liars!

(Lydia and several of her servants have remained behind.)

Adina (calling)—Oh! oh! servants of the most high God, which show us the way of salvation! Verily, it is true, it is true! Something wonderful has happened to me. Good friends, wilt thou tell me where I am?

Timothy (helping her up)—Thou hast been ill, and the servant of the most high God, upon whom thou didst call, hath healed thee in the name of Jesus.

Adina—O blessed day! But I fear that the mob will kill him. [Rumbling is heard in the distance.] I must go. If they kill him, I must die also.

Lydia (embracing her)—Nay, thou must come with me now. It will please him best. Thou wilt abide in my house. [They lead her away.]

[CURTAIN.]

Scene IV.—In the Market-place.

(The city judge or "ruler" sits on an elevated stand, with a canopy of Oriental drapery. On one side is a fruit-stall and on the other side a pottery and rug stall, with merchants in attendance. Horus and Jocca arrive with Paul and Silas, followed by a crowd of men and women. This scene may be previously arranged back of Scene III.)

Judge (leaning forward)—What meaneth this uproar, and why have ye come to me in this manner?

Horus (bowing)—Most noble sir, these men, being Jews, do exceedingly trouble our city and teach customs which are not lawful for us to receive, neither to observe, being Romans.

Jocca (clenching fists and waving arms)—Verily, they go about the city, upsetting our business and turning the minds of the people to believe on a god they can neither see nor hear.

Horus—By some trick they appear to banish evil spirits and demons, and it has been reported that they make even the blind to see.

Citizen (wildly)—The men are foul blasphemers, children of the wicked one, who will assuredly lead us into eternal death.

People (wildly)—Blasphemers! Sorcerers! Liars!

Judge (rising)—Hold thy peace, my people! There is no need for you to lose your heads in this matter. Verily, I have had reports of the doings and the teachings of these men. It is not good for such things to occur within our city. Therefore I command that they shall be beaten and then made secure within the inner prison until we shall have time to examine their

case further. Take them to the guards. [The crowd rushes off with Paul and Silas.]

[CURTAIN.]

SCENE V.—IN THE PRISON AT PHILIPPI.

(It is midnight, and only a dim light shines from a hanging candle, burning in a brass bowl. Paul and Silas are at right, with their feet in the stocks. Other prisoners on the floor at left. The floor is covered with straw. At rise of curtain, Paul sings "The Lord Is My Shepherd," and Silas prays briefly.)

A Prisoner—Wherefore dost thou sing and pray with such joy, when thou hast been beaten and made fast here within the inner prison?

Paul—Verily, our hearts do rejoice that we have been counted worthy to suffer for the Lord Jesus, whom we serve.

Another Prisoner—But if He hath the power of which thou hast told us, why doth He not come and deliver thee?

(There is a flash of lightning and the sound of earthquake. Door at left flies open and all prisoners are loosed from stocks and chains. Jailor rushes in and draws sword, as if to kill himself.)

Paul (springing to prevent him)—Sheathe thy sword and do thyself no harm, sir, for we are all here.

Jailor (calling to guard)—Bring me a light. [Guard enters presently with a small torch and the jailor falls upon his knees before Paul and Silas. Leading them out, jailor says:] Tell me, I pray thee, what must I do to be saved?

Paul—Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and thou shalt be saved, thou and thy house.

Jailor—Verily, I must believe all thou sayest, for none but the Lord could open the prison doors at this hour, with all the guard upon it.

Paul—Thou canst be baptized this same hour of the night if thou dost believe.

[CURTAIN.]

SCENE VI.—IN THE PRISON, NEXT MORNING.

(Paul, Silas and the other prisoners are seated, as at opening of Scene V.)

Jailor (entering)—Never has my heart been so happy as it is this day. I have been baptized in the name of the Lord Jesus. My sins have been blotted out, like the darkness of the night which faded with the morning sunlight. And throughout all my household there is peace.

Paul—Even so wilt the Lord Jesus always comfort thee.

Jailor—It grieves me greatly, my masters, that I must needs keep you bound here in this manner, but I must keep my vows to my country.

Guard (rushing in)—Oh, sirs, the magistrates have considered your case and have sent word to let you go!

Jailor (clasping his hands, with face uplifted)—Praises be to God. Therefore wilt thou depart in peace.

Paul (shaking his head)—Nay, for they have beaten us openly, uncondemned, being Romans, and have cast us into prison. So now they would have us

leave privately? Nay, let them come themselves and fetch us out.

Jailor (to guard)—Therefore wilt thou report this to the magistrates. [Guard bows and leaves.]

[CURTAIN.]

Scene VII.—The Same an Hour Later

(The jailor enters with judge and several other men.)

Judge—Wherefore have ye caused us to come hither in this manner? Wilt thou not obey our commands to depart?

Paul—Verily, thou hast beaten us openly uncondemned, being Romans, and hast cast us into this place in the sight of the people. But thou wouldst have us leave privately, as if to keep the people from knowing that thou hast found us guilty of no wrong.

Judge—I did not know that thou art a Roman citizen.

Paul—Verily, I am a native of Tarsus.

Judge (assisting the jailor to free them)—Therefore come thou with us and we will lead thee to thy abiding-place. [All leave.]

[CURTAIN.]

Scene VIII.—In the Home of Lydia.

(Paul is kneeling, with hands clasped and face uplifted. He is surrounded by a group, including Silas, Timothy, Luke, Lydia, Adina and other men and women, all on their knees. This is just a tableau.)

STORY 18

A LABOR RIOT

CHARACTERS.

PAUL—A Herald of the Cross.
DEMETRIUS—A Wealthy Silversmith.
PYRRHUS—Foreman of Silversmith's Shop.
TROPHIMUS—A Follower of Paul.
HELOTUS—Mayor of Ephesus.
WORKMEN—In the Idol Shops.
CITIZENS OF EPHESUS.
FRIENDS OF PAUL.

SCENE OF THE STORY.

(The scene is laid in front of the idol shop of Demetrius, in Ephesus. It is opposite the school of Tyrannus, where Paul is preaching.)

COSTUMES.

PAUL—An old man with white hair and beard. Flowing robe of white, with overdrapery of dark blue, edged with red.

DEMETRIUS—A man of middle age, with dark hair and beard. Flowing robe of dark material, with overdrapery of different color.

PYRRHUS—A man of middle age, with dark hair and beard. Tunic of dark cloth, with bare arms and legs. Sandals.

Trophimus—A young man without beard. Tunic of bright cloth, with overdrapery of contrasting color.

Helotus—A man of middle age, with dark hair and beard. Flowing robe of brown, with cape of purple or blue.

Workmen—Tunics of dark cloth, with bare arms and legs. Sandals. They have hammers and saws of peculiar designs. Beards.

Citizens—Robes of bright colors, with overdraperies of contrasting colors. Hoods and turbans. Have some children among them.

Friends of Paul—About five will do. They wear flowing robes, with mantles of contrasting colors. Several of these should be women.

Scene—The Street in Front of the Shop of Demetrius, Opposite the School of Tyrannus, in Ephesus.

(Demetrius stands outside the shop, watching passing citizens.)

Pyrrhus (entering right)—Ha, good master! I see that thou, as well as myself, hast curiosity. Surely great crowds are assembled for the festival of Ephesia to-day.

Demetrius (angrily)—But they do not buy the shrines that we make for them. How many did we sell for the Ephesia two years ago?

Pyrrhus—Diana be praised, we sold more than a score of thousands, gracious master.

(Shouts are heard off stage, "Great is Diana of the Ephesians!")

Demetrius (clenching his fists)—And how many last year?

Pyrrhus—There were fewer pilgrims last year, as thou knowest, honored sir, and only fifteen thousand shrines were sold. But that is not a small number. Now, this year—

Demetrius (snarling)—Yes, and what of this year? Only a beggardly five thousand! Great Diana of the Ephesians! [Tears his hair.]

Pyrrhus—But the festival hath just commenced, honored sir.

(Citizens pass and shout, "Great is Diana of the Ephesians!")

Demetrius—Verily, it hath just commenced, but many of the pilgrims do not come to worship the great Diana, but to listen to the barking of yonder filthy Jew, who stands there on the steps of the school of Tyrannus, proclaiming a new and terrible god, who will shortly destroy the temple of Diana, with all who worship her. How many silver shrines do you think will be sold when that shall come to pass? Stir up your wisdom and tell me that.

Pyrrhus—But why should we worry about the ravings of a witless Jew? Fool! Destroy the temple of Diana? Indeed!

(Shouts off stage.)

Demetrius (shaking fists)—There is nothing in heaven above nor in the earth beneath that can shake the power of the eternal Diana; and, praise be to the gods, my fortunes are linked with hers! But go thou forth through the streets, Pyrrhus, and say to the craftsmen who make images of the goddess, "Come hither at once."

Pyrrhus (bowing)—As thou hast said, good master, but surely thou dost not mean the makers of the miserable clay images, nor those who imitate thy work in bronze? [Citizens pass and shout.]

Demetrius (fiercely)—Yea, fetch them all—every one. Compel them to come. Tell them Demetrius hath a weighty matter to lay before them, a matter which hath to do with gold—aye, with gold!

(Shouts off stage.)

Pyrrhus (starting to go)—Thine order shall be obeyed, good master. [Stops and points off left.] But wilt thou look yonder at the throng in front of the school of Tyrannus! They are crazy from the teachings of the Jew. And see! they are making a fire with the books they bring forth. But thine order must be obeyed, sir. [Exit.]

Demetrius (throwing up hands and pacing to and fro)—Fools! They will be burning my shop over my head next.

Trophimus (entering)—Aye, and so they will, friend Demetrius. Believe on the Lord and repent of thy sins, brother, else thy soul, which is more than thy shop, will be in danger.

Demetrius (hissing)—And since when has Trophimus taken up the trade of the beggar Jew? I saw the wretch yesterday, ragged and sore-eyed, hooted by a crowd in the Agora. [Shouts off stage.]

Trophimus—Nevertheless, he hath prevailed gloriously over the powers of darkness that blind our city. This burning of profane and wicked books which thou seest is but a token of that greater triumph over evil which shall speedily come to pass. Know ye not that the day of the living God is at hand? That in proof

thereof the sick are raised up, the blind see, the lame walk, and they that mourn rejoice in hope? Come, therefore, bring forth thine idols and cast them also into the flames. And of the ill-gotten gold which thou hast hoarded from the sale of images, give unto the poor, and thyself give unto the Lord. So shalt thou be saved from thy sins, and the blessing of the Lord shall rest upon thee and upon thy house.

Demetrius (shaking fists)—The curses of Diana be upon thee!

(Shouts off stage. Pyrrhus returns with group of workmen.)

A Workman—What dost thou want with us, Demetrius? Dost thou not know that time is gold with us?

Demetrius (jumping upon a box)—I want that ye shall hear me, brother craftsmen. Yonder, before the school of Tyrannus, is a heap of ashes. That heap of ashes was once worth fifty thousand pieces of silver—aye, fifty thousand pieces!

(Citizens assemble to join workmen and hear Demetrius.)

A Workman—And what has that to do with us?

Demetrius (roaring)—Much! Those costly books were burned at the preaching of one Paul, a knavish Jew, who hath dwelt in our city for nearly three years. So would he burn the images of the great Diana, which we fashion to her honor and glory.

Workmen (shout)—Great is Diana of the Ephesians! [Repeat.]

Demetrius—Men, you know that this trade is the source of our prosperity. Moreover, your eyes and ears tell you that not only in Ephesus, but in almost the

whole of Roman Asia, this Paul hath convinced and won over great numbers of people by declaring that the gods made by hands are not gods at all. So, not only is our business in peril, but there is danger also that the temple of Diana will be neglected.

Workmen—Great is Diana of the Ephesians! [Repeat.] Death to the Jew! Death to the Jew!

(Helotus approaches and they fall back, bowing to him.)

Helotus (taking the stand vacated by Demetrius)—Men of Ephesus, is there any one to deny that this city is the temple-keeper of the great Diana, and of the statue which fell down from Jupiter? As these are undeniable facts, you ought to keep calm and do nothing rash. The men yonder are neither robbers of temples nor blasphemers of our goddess. If, however, Demetrius and these other workmen have a charge to make against any one, there are court days and there are magistrates. Let both parties take legal proceedings. But if you want anything more, it will have to be settled in the regular assembly. For I declare to you that we are in danger of prosecution because of this riot, there being nothing to account for it. And in that case we will have no excuse for this disorderly gathering. Let us depart.

(All exit except Trophimus and a couple of others, who stand talking in pantomime a moment, when Paul and several of the Christians enter.)

Trophimus (advancing)—Good Paulos, we must praise God again for the sparing of thy life this day. For the mob that assembled here under command of Demetrius would have torn thee asunder had not the mayor dispersed the rioters.

Paul—Let not your hearts be troubled, my beloved. Ye know that since coming among you I have been serving the Lord with all lowliness of mind and with many tears and trials which befell me through the plottings of the Jews. But to them and also to the Gentiles I have testified of their need of repentance to God and faith in our Lord Jesus Christ.

And now, behold, I go bound in the spirit unto Jerusalem, not knowing the things that shall befall me there, save that the Holy Spirit witnesseth in every city, saying that bonds and afflictions await me. But I am not afraid, for I do not count my life dear to myself. Therefore, brethren, since it is likely that ye shall see my face no more, I commend you to God and to the word of His grace.

(They cling to him with tears.)

Why are you crying and breaking my heart like this? For my part, I am ready not only to go to prison, but to suffer death at Jerusalem for the cause of Jesus the Master. Let us pray.

(TABLEAU—Paul kneeling in center, face uplifted and hands clasped. The others kneeling around him.)

[CURTAIN.]

STORY 19

AN AMBASSADOR IN BONDS

CHARACTERS.

PAUL—The Ambassador.
ALEXANDER—A Jew from Ephesus.
FOUR NAZARITES—Followers of the Nazarene.
A COMPANY OF JEWS.
LYSIAS—Captain of the Guard.
TWO SOLDIERS.
AN ANGEL.
ANANIAS—The High Priest.
MEMBERS OF THE SANHEDRIN.
JESSE—Paul's Nephew.
FELIX CLAUDIUS, PORCIUS FESTUS } Governors of Judea.
TERTULLUS—A Lawyer from Jerusalem.
HEROD AGRIPPA—The King.

SCENES OF THE STORY.

SCENE I.—The temple in Jerusalem; Paul's arrest.

SCENE II.—On the steps of the temple; a Roman citizen.

SCENE III.—In the prison; a vision.

SCENE IV.—In the council-room next day; the plot of the Jews.

SCENE V.—In the prison office; the spy.

SCENE VI.—The council-room in Cæsarea a week later; before Felix.

SCENE VII.—The same, two years later; before Festus.

SCENE VIII.—The same, two weeks later; before Agrippa.

COSTUMES.

PAUL—A man of middle age, with dark hair and short, dark beard. Robe of dark brown, girded at the waist with a cord, for first four scenes. Throughout remainder of the play he wears a robe of white, reaching to the ankles, with overdrapery of dark red. Bare legs. Sandals.

ALEXANDER—Flowing robe of bright color, with overdrapery. Dark hair and beard. Bare legs. Sandals.

NAZARITES—Robes of dark brown, similar to Paul's. Shaven heads.

JEWS AND MEMBERS OF SANHEDRIN—Flowing robes of bright colors, with overdraperies. Some have dark and some gray beards. Bare legs.

LYSIAS—Young man with short, dark beard. Tunic of tan or brown, edged with Roman design in purple and gold. Cape of dark brown, lined with yellow, hanging from shoulders. Helmet made from old derby hat painted white, with paper, fan-shaped ornament in front. Bare legs. Sandals.

SOLDIERS—Costumes similar to that worn by Lysias.

ANANIAS—An old man with white hair and beard. Robe of white, with cloak of purple, edged with gold. High turban of white.

FELIX AND FESTUS—Flowing robe of rich color, trimmed with gold. Low crown of gold. The same person may represent both characters.

TERTULLUS—Costume similar to that worn by Alexander.

AGRIPPA—Costume similar to that worn by Felix and Festus. Has a dark beard.

SCENE I.—IN THE TEMPLE IN JERUSALEM.

(The walls are hung with rich draperies. At rear center is an altar upon which candles burn in a candelabra. If possible, have several "marble" pillars across center of platform, forming a sort of portico at front. Paul is at prayer with four Nazarites. At front of the platform is a company of Jews, talking in several groups. In one group is Alexander, recently come from Ephesus.)

Alexander (pointing)—Look you! Yonder is the fellow Saul.

A Jew—What! the mad apostate who hath stirred up all of Asia with his accursed heresies?

Alexander—Aye, the very same. And do you see him now with the four Nazarites? Hypocrite! He would pretend to be a law-abiding Jew in the temple, after being cast out of every synagogue in Asia. [Motions to all the Jews.] Israelites, help! This is the fellow that teaches men everywhere to disregard the law and the temple. And, besides, he brought Greeks into the temple and hath defiled this holy place. He is not fit to live.

Jews (rushing from various parts of the temple)—Death, death to the man who hath defiled the holy temple! [They force Paul out of the temple and shut the doors.]

[CURTAIN.]

SCENE II.—ON THE STEPS OF THE TEMPLE.

(The mob is about to beat Paul when Lysias and several soldiers rush in, causing the Jews gradually to fall back.)

Lysias—Make way there! Who is this man, and what is his offense?

Jews—Apostate! Blasphemer! Defiler of the temple!

Lysias (to guards)—Bind him and take him to the castle. [They bind him with chains.]

Jews—Away with him! Away with him! Kill him!

Paul (to Lysias)—May I speak a word with you?

Lysias—Verily, if thou wilt. [Motions for silence.]

Paul—I am a Jew, a native of Tarsus in Cilicia. But I was brought up in this city under the teachings of Gamaliel and trained in the strict system of our ancestral law. While I was praying one day in the temple I fell into a trance and saw Jesus, the Son of God, who said unto me: "Make haste, and get thee quickly out of Jerusalem; because they will not receive of thee testimony concerning me, . . . for I will send thee forth far hence unto the Gentiles."

Jews—Kill him! Kill him! A fellow like this should not be allowed to live. [They throw pebbles at him in their frenzy.]

Lysias (to guards)—Take him to the castle and scourge him.

Paul—Is it lawful for you to scourge a man that is a Roman and uncondemned?

Lysias (surprised)—Do you mean that you are a Roman citizen?

Paul—Yes.

Lysias—I had to pay a heavy price for my citizenship.

Paul—I am a Roman citizen by birth.

Lysias (to guards)—Take him in hold until morning and I will look into the case further. [They exit with Paul, followed by mob.]

[CURTAIN.]

SCENE III.—IN THE PRISON.

(Spotlight shows Paul crouched on a pile of straw in a corner, and before him stands an angel. There need be no other furnishings in the room, although in the semi-darkness several other prisoners may be seen lying on the floor.)

Angel—Be of good cheer, Paul, for as thou hast testified of me in Jerusalem, so must thou bear witness also at Rome.

[CURTAIN.]

SCENE IV.—IN THE COUNCIL-ROOM NEXT DAY.

(Ananias, the high priest, is seated behind his desk, with a guard on either side of him. Members of Sanhedrin seated in front. Paul stands between two soldiers, and Lysias is near.)

Lysias—Honored sir and members of the Sanhedrin, I have brought before you the prisoner taken yesterday upon complaint of some of the Jews that he defileth the temple. He also claims to be a Roman citizen.

Ananias (to Paul)—Do you deny the charges made against you?

Paul—Brethren, I have done what I believed to be my duty to God with a clear conscience, up to this very day.

Ananias (to Lysias)—Smite him on the mouth! [It is done.]

Paul (to Ananias)—God will strike thee, thou whited wall. Dost thou sit there to try me in accordance with law, and yet, in defiance of law, order them to strike me?

Lysias—Do you mean to insult God's high priest?

Paul—I knew not, brethren, that it was the high priest, for it is written: "Thou shalt not speak evil of a ruler of thy people." [Looking over the assembly.] Brethren, I am a Pharisee, the son of a Pharisee. Of the hope and resurrection of the dead I am called in question.

Pharisees—The man is innocent!

Sadducees—Away with him! Away with him!

Pharisees (jumping up)—We find no evil in the man!

Another Pharisee—If a spirit or an angel hath spoken to him, let us not fight against God.

Sadducees (rushing upon Paul)—Away with him from the earth!

Pharisees (following them)—To the rescue! To the rescue!

Lysias (rushing among them)—Guards, remove the prisoner and clear the court!

(Paul is removed, followed by the Sanhedrin, all gesticulating wildly, exclaiming as above.)

Lysias (when all are gone)—By all the gods of Rome! I can not understand these Jews. First, they are for beating the man to death, then half of them fight the other half like a pack of curs. But if the prisoner is a Roman citizen, as he claims, they shall not harm him while this castle stands. [Starts to go.]

Ananias—A Pharisee, he says, and the son of a Pharisee! Accursed be all the Pharisees with their blasphemous teachings about the resurrection.

(Exit Lysias, and Ananias is about to follow, being half-way across the room, when Alexander enters.)

Alexander—Most honored sir, may I have a word with thee?

Ananias—Surely, my friend. What is there to trouble thee?

Alexander—I have just heard of the uproar concerning the prisoner Paul, and have come to tell thee that there is a plan on foot whereby we may outwit the Romans, humiliate the Pharisees, and at the same time rid the world of this dangerous apostate, who may otherwise escape our vengeance on the plea of his Roman citizenship.

Ananias (eagerly)—'Tis an excellent thought, good friend. Tell me what thou wouldst do. Thou seemest keenly alive in thy thought.

Alexander (cautiously)—In the courtyard outside there are forty of us, law-abiding and reverent, and zealous concerning the commandments of Moses. We have an unspeakable hatred for the man Paul, who hath said abominable things against the temple, against the law and concerning that Nazarene who died upon the cross. We have, therefore, bound ourselves with a most solemn vow that we will neither eat nor drink until we have killed him. So we want you now, in the name of the Sanhedrin, to send word to the captain of the guards that he bring Paul before you again tomorrow, as though you intend to examine him further. But before he gets here we will be ready to make way with him.

Ananias (putting his hands upon Alexander)—It is a righteous vow, O son of Abraham—a holy vow. May Jehovah grant its speedy fulfillment. As for me, I swear that I will do as thou hast said. [Exit.]

[CURTAIN.]

SCENE V.—IN THE PRISON OFFICE.

(Lysias is standing at left. Jesse enters from right, accompanied by a soldier.)

Soldier (to Lysias)—The prisoner Paul asked me to fetch this young man to you, for he has something to tell you. He is a nephew of the man.

Lysias (kindly to Jesse, who seems frightened)—What is it thou hast to tell me, son?

Jesse—Some of the Jews have arranged with Ananias to take Uncle Paul before the council again tomorrow, on the plea of making further inquiry into his case. But, pray, do not let them persuade you, for more than forty of them are lying in wait to seize him. In fact, they have bound themselves with an oath that they will not eat nor drink until they have killed him. And now they are waiting for a promise from thee.

Lysias (slapping his thigh)—By all the gods of Hades! Thou surely art a noble spy, my lad. But thou canst rest easy, for we will find a way to keep those fellows hungry and thirsty for some days yet. [To soldier:] Wilt thou, sir, take the prisoner to-night to Cæsarea under guard of two hundred infantry, two hundred lancers and seventy troopers, with horses for the man to ride? See that thou deliver him safe and uninjured to Governor Felix.

Soldier (bowing)—Thy commands shall be obeyed, sir. [Exit.]

Lysias (to Jesse)—Thou mayest go, my lad, and have no fear.

[CURTAIN.]

Scene VI.—In the Council Chamber at Cæsarea Five Days Later.

(Felix is seated behind his desk, with Ananias beside him. Several members of the Sanhedrin are seated before them, and Tertullus stands at one side. Paul stands between guards.)

Felix (standing and reading from a letter)—Claudius Lysias, to the most excellent Governor Felix, greeting:—The prisoner whom I send you was seized by the Jews and was on the point of being killed by them when I came upon them with a guard and rescued him. Then I learned that he is a Roman citizen. As I wished to know the offense which the Jews had against him, I took him down to their Sanhedrin, and there I found that the accusations related to certain questions of their law, but that nothing worthy of death or imprisonment was charged against him. But, learning that a plot has been made against the man's life, I send him to you. At the same time I have notified his accusers to bring their charges before you. Farewell. [He crumples up the letter and turns to Paul.] From what province art thou?

Paul—I am a Jew of Tarsus in Cilicia.

Felix—I am ready for the charges of thine accusers.

Tertullus (coming forward)—We owe it to you, Your Excellency, that we are enjoying profound peace,

and we owe it to your foresight that this nation is constantly securing reforms. But, not to be tedious, I beg you, with your usual fairness, to hear a brief statement of our case. We have found this man a public pest. He is one who stirs up disputes among the Jews all over the world, and is a leader of the Nazarenes. He even attempted to desecrate the temple itself, but we caught him. And you will be able, after examining him, to satisfy yourself of our charges. [Members of Sanhedrin nod approvingly.]

A Sadducee—Our barrister speaks the truth, Your Excellency. His words are words of wisdom, and we pray thee to heed them.

Felix (to Paul)—Dost thou deny these charges?

Paul—Knowing as I do for how many years you have served as judge to this nation, it is with confidence that I undertake my own defense. There is abundant proof that it is not more than twelve days ago that I went up to Jerusalem, after an absence of some years in Asia, to bring charitable gifts to my nation and to make offerings. It was while thus engaged that my accusers found me in the temple, after completing a period of abstinence, but without any disorder, either in the temple or in the synagogues, or about the city. And they can not establish the charges they now make against me. However, I do acknowledge to you that, as a supporter of the cause which they call heretical, I worship the God of my ancestors. I believe everything that is in accordance with the law and that is written in the prophets. And I have confidence in God—a confidence which they also cherish themselves—that some day there is to be a resurrection of good and bad alike.

Felix—I must give this case further consideration. When Captain Lysias comes down I will give my decision. You may go for the present, but when I find an opportunity I will send for you again.

Paul—But if I have done no evil, freedom is mine, according to the law.

Felix (angrily)—I am the law! Thou shalt wear the chain during my pleasure. Guards, remove the prisoner.

[CURTAIN.]

SCENE VII.—SAME AS BEFORE, TWO YEARS LATER.

(Festus is on the throne. Members of Sanhedrin and Jews of Cæsarea are seated before him. Ananias stands in front.)

Ananias (bowing)—Most excellent Festus, there is a certain man named Paul who has been under bonds here in Cæsarea for two years past, and concerning him we have assembled here, with thy permission. This man is a mischievous person and a transgressor of the law of Moses. He was arrested by us in an attempt to profane our holy temple, an offense which thou knowest to be punishable with death. Moreover, he hath been guilty of numerous offenses against the Roman Government, having stirred up insurrections against Cæsar in many provinces, as also in Jerusalem. We therefore unite in requesting that thou wilt cause this man to be fetched at once to Jerusalem, so that we may deal with him after our law.

Festus (haughtily)—It is not the custom of Rome to deliver any man to death by way of doing a favor, but to place the accused and the accusers face to face,

giving the accused a full opportunity for his defense. Bring forth the prisoner.

(A guard goes to summon Paul, who enters shortly, accompanied by two guards. While they are being summoned, the Sanhedrists and Jews keep up a pantomime of talking among themselves. Ananias paces back and forth.)

Festus (when Paul has arrived)—Sir, you have been summoned to answer charges made by these members of the Sanhedrin who have come down from Jerusalem. What hast thou to say?

Paul—I am well aware of such charges, most excellent Festus, as they brought me here more than two years ago, to stand before Felix.

Sanhedrists (shouting)—He is a public pest! He abhorreth the law! He defileth God's holy temple! He causeth riots and disorders in the city! Everywhere he stirreth up trouble.

A Guard—Sit down! Hold your peace! Let the prisoner speak.

Festus (after order is restored)—What sayest thou now?

Paul (calmly)—Neither against the law of the Jews, nor against the temple, nor yet against Cæsar, have I offended in any way whatsoever.

Festus—Wilt thou go up to Jerusalem and be tried on these charges under my protection?

Paul (indignantly)—No! Your Excellency. I am standing at Cæsar's judgment-seat, the place where I ought to be tried. I have not wronged the Jews, as you can see clearly enough. If, however, I have done wrong and committed any offense deserving of death, I do not ask to escape it. But if there is nothing in

the accusations of these people, no one has power to give me up to them. I appeal to Cæsar.

(Sanhedrists show signs of indignation and rage.)

Festus (after thinking a moment)—Very well. You have appealed to Cæsar; to Cæsar thou shalt go!

(Sanhedrists jump up in a rage.)

[CURTAIN.]

SCENE VIII.—SAME AS BEFORE, TWO WEEKS LATER.

(Festus is on the throne, and by his side is Agrippa, who has come to visit him. Before them is a company of citizens invited for the hearing, and in front stands Paul, chained to two guards.)

Festus (rising)—King Agrippa and all here present, you see before you the man about whom the whole Jewish people have applied to me, both at Jerusalem and here, loudly asserting that he should be put to death. However, I found that he hath done nothing deserving of death. So, as he hath appealed to Cæsar, I have decided to send him. But I have nothing to write about him to my imperial master, and for that reason I have brought him before you, King Agrippa, that, after you examine him, I may have something to write. For it seems absurd to send a prisoner without making any charges against him. [Sits.]

Agrippa (to Paul)—Thou art at liberty to speak for thyself.

Paul (stretching forth his hands)—I think myself happy, King Agrippa, that it is before you that I am to make my defense to-day, since you are so familiar with the customs of the Jewish world. Therefore, hear me with patience, I beg you.

My manner of life from early youth is known to all the Jews. They could testify, if they would, that, according to the strictest sect of our religion, I have been a true Pharisee. And now I stand here to be judged for the hope of the promise made of God to our fathers. Yet this hope is charged against me as a crime, and that by the Jews. Why do you all hold it to be beyond belief that God should raise the dead?

However, I myself once thought it my duty to oppose the cause of Jesus of Nazareth, and I did so in Jerusalem. Many times in the synagogues I tried by punishments to force the people to blaspheme. Then, I secured orders from the chief priests to go to Damascus to continue this work. But, in the middle of the day, King Agrippa, there came out of the sky a light brighter than the glare of the sun, which shone all around me and those who were with me. We all fell to the ground, and then I heard a voice saying to me in Hebrew: "Saul, Saul, why persecutest thou me? It is hard for thee to kick against the goad." "Who art thou, Lord?" I asked. "I am Jesus, whom thou persecutest," the Master said, "but arise and stand upon thy feet: for to this end have I appeared unto thee, to appoint thee a minister and a witness both of the things wherein thou hast seen me, and of the things wherein I will yet appear unto thee, delivering thee from the people and from the Gentiles, unto whom I send thee, to open their eyes, that they may turn from darkness to light, and from the power of Satan unto God, that they may receive remission of sins."

After that, King Agrippa, I did not fail to obey the heavenly vision, but first to those in Damascus and Jerusalem, and then through the whole of Judea, and

to the Gentiles as well, I began to preach repentance and turning to God. This is why the Jews seized me in the temple and made attempts to kill me. However, I have received help from God to this very day. So I stand here and bear my testimony to high and low alike, that the Christ had to suffer, and, by rising from the dead, He brought light both to our nation and to the Gentiles.

Festus—Paul, thou art beside thyself. Much learning doth make thee mad.

Paul—I am not mad, most noble Festus, but the statements I am making are true and sober. Indeed, His Majesty [nodding to Agrippa] knows all about these matters, so I speak before him without hesitation. King Agrippa, believest thou the prophets? I know that thou believest.

Agrippa (nodding)—Almost thou persuadest me to be a Christian.

Paul—I would to God that not only thou, but all who hear me to-day, were become what I am myself, except for these chains.

(Agrippa and Festus confer in whispers a moment.)

Festus (to guards)—Remove the prisoner.

Agrippa (after Paul has gone)—The man hath done nothing worthy of death or imprisonment. He might have been set at liberty if he had not appealed to Cæsar.

[CURTAIN.]

STORY 20

THE LAST JOURNEY

CHARACTERS.

PAUL—A Herald of the Cross.
LUKE—His Companion.
PARMA—Captain of a Ship.
JULIUS—Paul's Guard.
ONESIMUS—A Runaway Slave.
TWO GUARDS.
SAILORS.
GROUP OF PRISONERS.
PUBLIUS—Governor of Malta.
ACHOR—His Father.
NATIVES OF MALTA.
BLIND, LAME AND SICK PEOPLE.
BURRUS—Imperial Warden in Rome.

SCENES OF THE STORY.

SCENE I.—On a ship bound for Rome; advice ignored.

SCENE II.—The same, two weeks later; the shipwreck.

SCENE III.—On the island of Malta next day; friends.

SCENE IV.—At the governor's home; miracles.

SCENE V.—A street in Malta; farewell gifts.

SCENE VI.—A house in Rome, several weeks later; ready to be offered.

COSTUMES.

PAUL—An old man with white hair and beard. Flowing robe of white, with overdrapery of dark red. Sandals.

LUKE—Man past middle age, with hair and beard turning gray. White robe, with overdrapery of dark blue.

PARMA—Tunic of brown cloth, reaching just below the knees, with girdle and turban of same material. No beard. Bare legs. Sandals.

JULIUS—Tunic of tan or brown, edged with Roman design in purple and gold. Cape of dark brown, lined with yellow, hangs from shoulders. Helmet made from old derby hat painted white, with paper, fan-shaped ornament in front. Bare legs. Sandals.

ONESIMUS AND OTHER SAILORS—Tunics of dark blue, reaching just below the knees. Turbans of white.

GUARDS—Costume similar to that of Julius.

PRISONERS—Costumes similar to that of Luke.

PUBLIUS—Flowing robe of rich color, with cape and turban of contrasting color. Short, dark beard.

ACHOR—Costume similar to that of Paul.

NATIVES OF MALTA—Costumes similar to that of Paul.

BURRUS—Use the man representing Julius.

SCENE I.—ON AN ALEXANDRIAN WHEAT-SHIP.

(Railing of ship can be seen back stage, and beyond is a plain, blue-sky drop. Boxes and casks are

piled on one side, and sacks of grain on opposite side. Lights on full, for it is day. Electric fan off right gives indication of a breeze. Parma, Julius, Paul, Luke and several sailors are discovered.)

Parma (to Julius)—It is but thirty-four miles from Fair Havens to Phenice, sir. This is no place to spend the winter. I am willing to go on to Phenice, but it is for you to say, sir.

Julius—I am not a sailor, good Parma, but, if we must winter hereabouts, Phenice is surely preferable to yonder desolate place. [Points.] If you think it safe, let us get under way at once.

Paul (approaching them)—Sirs, I beg your attention.

Julius—Ah! Paulos, what wilt thou?

Paul—If we loose from this harbor, I perceive that the voyage will result in much damage, not only to the ship, but to our lives also.

Parma (laughing contemptuously)—By Bacchus! And who is this convict that wants to navigate the vessel for us?

Julius (ignoring him)—This harbor is very small and even unsafe, good Paulos. Surely it will be better to go on to Phenice, which is less than a day's journey.

Paul—The day of atonement is already past. The winds and the sea may not be safely trusted longer.

Parma (roaring)—The fellow is a Jew and therefore a coward! Let him hold his tongue about matters concerning which he has not been asked. At this moment, sir, there is a south wind blowing fit to fan a lady's cheek. 'Twill waft us to Phenice before sundown.

Julius—Then let us loose and away at once.

Parma (calling)—All hands ahoy! [The sailors move quickly.]

[CURTAIN.]

SCENE II.—SAME AS BEFORE, TWO WEEKS LATER.

(There are flashes of lightning and furious wind. All lights off except two dim footlights. Company of prisoners huddled on deck, with Paul in center. Guards are on either side.)

Onesimus (crawling toward Paul)—Art thou afraid, Paulos?

Paul—The Spirit of God moved upon the face of the waters; who hath measured the waters also in the hollow of His hand; who stretcheth out the heavens like a curtain; who maketh the clouds His chariot; who walketh upon the wings of the wind. O Lord, how manifest are Thy works! The earth is full of Thy riches, as also is this great sea. I will be glad in the Lord.

Onesimus (who is one of the sailors)—And is this the "unknown God" of whom thou didst speak in Athens?

Paul—Who art thou?

Onesimus—I am Onesimus, once a slave to Philemon in Colossæ. I escaped from my master, taking some money which I stole from him. I tell thee this because I know thou art a holy man and because death stares me in the face and I am afraid. Can thy God save?

Paul (placing his hands upon Onesimus)—Indeed He can, my lad. For He sent His only Son, Jesus the Christ, to show men the way to live. But they have

rejected Him, only a few being willing to follow. But all things that God requireth are possible to every one that believeth.

Onesimus (kneeling)—Lo, I believe with all my heart.

Paul—Thy faith will result in thy salvation.

Parma (rushing in)—Good teacher, the storm is furious to-night, and my men are mad with frenzy. Pray, tell me what to do.

Paul—Sir, ye should have listened to my counsel and not have loosed from Crete; then would ye have been spared this harm and loss. But I exhort you now to be of good cheer, for there shall be no loss of any man's life among you, but only of the ship. For the angel of God hath spoken to me, saying: "Fear not, Paul; thou must stand before Cæsar. And lo! God hath granted thee all them that sail with thee." Wherefore, sir, be of good cheer, for I believe God that it shall be even as it was told me. However, we must be cast upon a certain island.

A Guard (to Julius)—What about the prisoners, sir? We are accountable for them with our lives. In order that they shall not now escape us, nothing remains but to put them at once to the sword. They are a sore menace.

Julius (shaking his head)—Nay, nay! Do we not owe our lives to the wisdom of one of them? Loose all of them and let those that can swim get to land, if they are able. [Exit guard.]

Parma (waving his arms)—Every man overboard! An island is near by. [All rush off.]

[CURTAIN.]

SCENE III.—ON THE ISLAND OF MALTA.

(Outdoor scene, with camp-fire in center, surrounded by all characters from last scene. The fire can be arranged by covering an electric-light bulb with red paper and piling brush over it. Publius enters from right, accompanied by several natives. The group around the fire falls back and stares at them.)

Publius—Greetings unto thee, good strangers, and welcome to our province. I am Publius, governor of this island.

Parma (advancing)—And I am Parma, captain of yonder sunken ship. But all of my men, both sailors and prisoners, have been saved.

Publius—Truly, thou hast had a marvelous escape. The storm was furious and there is nothing left of the ship but the broken hull tossing yonder. [Points.] I have sent some of my men to fetch tents, clothing and food.

Parma—We are grateful, most noble Publius, for your kindness.

(Paul enters with armful of brush, which he throws on the fire. A piece of rope, painted black, is twisted around his arm to represent a snake. Natives cry in alarm.)

A Native—Behold, this fellow must be a murderer. He hath escaped the sea, but the gods continue their vengeance upon him.

(Paul holds up his arm, showing the snake, then shakes it off into the fire. Natives stand back in awe.)

A Native—Presently he will be swollen. Then he will drop dead.

A Native—It is a poisonous viper!

Publius (to natives)—Assuredly, this man is a god, for no human hath suffered the bite of a viper and lived.

Paul—Nay, good friends, I am no god, but only human, as are all of you. However, I am a servant of the true God, Jehovah, and, because I have been ordained of Him to proclaim the story of His Son Jesus, whom He sent to show us the way to everlasting life, He doth protect me from all harm until I shall finish my journey to Rome, whither I am bound.

Publius—And wilt thou, good friend, come and abide as the guest of Publius, governor of this island? For I would hear more of this Jesus of whom thou dost speak. Both thou and thy friends are welcome.

Paul—We will go with thee gladly. [All exit.]

[CURTAIN.]

SCENE IV.—PORCH OF THE GOVERNOR'S HOME, SEVERAL DAYS LATER.

(Paul, Publius and Achor come from the house. A multitude of sick, blind and crippled folks are swarming the steps, crying and moaning.)

A Cripple—Oh, help me, good teacher!

A Paralytic (carried on cot by four friends)—Have pity upon me!

A Blind Man—Wilt thou look upon my affliction and heal me?

Publius—What meaneth this disturbance, my people?

A Cripple—Most noble ruler, we have heard of the marvelous works of this man [points to Paul]—how he did restore your venerable father when he was nigh

unto death with fever, so we have come to seek his aid in our affliction.

Another Cripple—Verily, his fame hath spread throughout the land.

Blind Man (reaching toward Paul)—Oh, good master, wilt thou not have compassion upon one who was born blind?

(Cries and moanings continue.)

Publius (to Paul)—What shall I say unto them, sir?

Paul (to the people)—Verily, my friends, I come not as one seeking fame or fortune, but only as a prisoner bound for Rome, where I am to present my case before the emperor. As a servant of Jesus, the Son of God, I have traveled through country and cities, proclaiming His saving power and His redeeming love. Thus I have been accused by the Jews of upsetting the laws of Moses, of defiling the temple and of being a heretic. Several times I have been in prison, and recently for a period of several years; many times I have been beaten; once I was stoned, and thrice I was shipwrecked. All this I have suffered because I believe that Jesus is my Saviour, and in Him there is joy and peace. Wilt thou also believe on Him?

People (crying)—Yea, I believe! Praise His holy name!

Paul (descending the steps and placing his hands upon those who are afflicted)—Then, in His name I command thee to receive thy sight. In His name arise and walk. In His name thy sins are forgiven. [The people leap about joyfully, singing and praising God and embracing one another.]

[CURTAIN.]

Scene V.—A Street in Melita.

(Paul, Luke, Parma, Julius, Achor and Publius enter, followed by crowd of natives. Paul and his friends are laden with gifts.)

Paul—We are grateful for your love and kindness, my friends. Let not your hearts be sad because I depart from you. The Lord our God, even Jesus, His Son, will supply your needs.

Publius—Thy ministries have been joyful unto us, good sir. We shall always be followers of Jesus, the Christ, for thou hast revealed Him unto us.

Paul (hands uplifted)—May the Lord bless thee and keep thee; the Lord make His face to shine upon thee; the Lord lift up the light of His countenance upon thee and give thee peace.

[curtain.]

Scene VI.—A Room in a House in Rome, Several Months Later.

(Paul is seated at right. Luke is seated at back center, behind a table. Guard stands at door, left. He answers a knock at the door.)

Guard (to Paul)—Burrus, the imperial warden, is outside, sir.

Paul—He may come in at once.

Burrus (entering)—And how is the good Paulos to-day? I trust you will find these quarters to your comfort. Before Julius departed, leaving thee in my care, he told me of your defense before Festus and King Agrippa, both of whom declared you not guilty of any transgression of law, but it was because you

appealed to Cæsar that they sent you here to Rome. Therefore I am instructed to allow you every liberty within my power until the emperor shall summon thee.

Paul—Thine arrangements are very kind, sir, and I shall not abuse the privileges thou hast granted to me.

Burrus—As I came to the door I met a young man who claims to have known thee in Athens, and who also was a sailor on the ship that brought thee to Rome. He desires to see thee, sir.

Paul—Wilt thou bring him to me now? [Exit Burrus.]

Onesimus (running in and falling before Paul)—Oh, good Paulos, if thou art a servant of the Lord Jesus, let me, I pray thee, be *thy* slave. Then I may learn more of the Master whom we both serve.

Paul (putting his hands on Onesimus' head)—Verily, my dear lad, it shall be as thou hast asked. But some day I shall write a letter to thy former master, Philemon, who received the glad tidings of Jesus some years ago. He will receive thee, then, not as a slave, but as a brother, which indeed thou art.

Onesimus (lifting his head)—I will do this thing, because thou hast bidden me; and if I perish, I perish.

Paul—Nay, my son, thy master will receive thee as he would receive me, in all love and honor for the sake of the Lord Jesus, who gave His life for us. And now wilt thou abide quietly while our good brother Luke shall write for me a letter to Timothy, who is ministering in the church at Ephesus.

Luke—I am ready, my brother. Thou wilt have many things to tell the brethren. [Prepares to write.]

[SLOW CURTAIN.]

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